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March 27, 2025

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S.B. No. 224, SD1, HD1: RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION

Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender **supports SB 224, SD1, HD1**. This bill requires the Department of Corrections to inform incarcerated individuals about the availability of departmental assistance to obtain civil identification cards and provide that assistance upon request.

Upon release, incarcerated individuals already face numerous barriers to successful community reintegration. Lack of identification compounds those barriers and severely limits one's ability to secure housing, government assistance, employment, and access to financial institutions. Lack of identification is often the first step towards failure after release.

“Burdensome documentation requirements often mean a person needs one form of ID (such as a birth certificate) to get another ID (such as a driver's license). When someone is jailed or incarcerated, many of their belongings, including IDs, are taken from them, and these may not be returned upon release. In some cases, jails or prisons will intentionally destroy inmates' personal property, including IDs. Depending on how long a person is incarcerated, even if their IDs are returned to them, the IDs may have long since expired and no longer be valid... A lack of ID limits access to essential services, such as social safety net programs that can support successful reentry, such as food assistance (e.g., SNAP) or cash assistance... Some states and public programs already ban formerly incarcerated people from accessing these key services, limiting their chances at successful reentry—in states or for

programs where this is not the case, a lack of valid ID poses another obstacle to accessing these essential supports.”¹

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

¹ <https://www.mapresearch.org/file/ID-info-formerly-incarcerated-people.pdf>



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 224 SD 1 HD 1
RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION

House Committee on Finance
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 28, 2025

3:30PM

Room 308

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB 224 SD 1 HD 1 which requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to assist inmates with obtaining their civil identification card, birth certificate, social security card, and other relevant identification necessary for successful reentry into society, as soon as practicable but at least one year before the inmate's parole or release date; provided that the department shall assist inmates in obtaining a civil identification card even if the department fails to meet the timelines established by this measure.

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.

Accordingly, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs urges this committee to **PASS SB 224 SD 1 HD 1**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important 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.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalū Kalaima
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Administration

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Correctional Institutions

Sanna Muñoz
Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services
and
Programs

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 224, SENATE DRAFT 1, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION.

by
Tommy Johnson, Director
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

House Committee on Finance
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Friday, March 28, 2025, 3:30 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & via Videoconference

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 224, Senate Draft (SD) 1, House Draft (HD) 1, which proposes DCR to collaborate with other agencies to inform and assist inmates in obtaining identifying documents necessary for their successful reentry into society, as soon as practicable, or within established time frames.

As part of the intake process and with the inmate's consent, DCR notifies and assists inmates with obtaining civil ID Cards, replacement birth certificates and/or social security cards, if needed. DCR obtains social security cards through its Memorandum of Agreement with the office of the Social Security Administration. DCR is also exploring the possibility of including assistance with renewing inmates' Hawai'i State driver's licenses prior to expiration while incarcerated.

DCR is working with the City and County to update the current State satellite machine at the Halawa Correctional Facility (HCF), as well as secure additional satellite identification machines for other DCR facilities to supplement its efforts and increase the number of inmates DCR assists.

SB 224, SD 1, HD 1 Relating to Identification.
House Committee on Finance
March 28, 2025
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DCR continues to work with other agencies, as well as internally, to increase and improve efforts to notify and assist inmates in need of identifying documents, prioritize inmates with upcoming scheduled release dates, adhere to prescribed timelines, and provides interpreters, as necessary, to complete these processes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of SB 224, SD 1, HD 1.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
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TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

March 27, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 224 SD1 HD1– RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION.**

Hearing: March 28, 2025, at 3:30 pm
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this 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: This bill requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to assist inmates with obtaining civil identification cards and other identification documents within a certain time. (HD1)

The Committees on Judiciary and Ways and Means amended this measure by requiring the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to provide assistance to inmates in obtaining identification cards and other identifying documents, even if the Department fails to meet the timelines established by this measure.

March 27, 2025

Page 2

The Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs amended this measure by making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

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

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair

Representative Janna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Friday, March 28, 2025

Room 308 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

3:30 PM

STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB 244 SD1, HD1 - IDENTIFICATION

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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 3,720 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars¹ and under the "care and custody" of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as of March 24, 2025. We are always mindful that 936 - 49.5% - of Hawai`i's male prison population (1,890) 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 SB 224 SD1. HD1. The law requiring identification for people being released from incarceration passed in 2017 and 8 years later, DCR is still making excuses for not issuing identification documents to those being released. WHY? The Waikiki Health Center Pu`uhonua Project seems to be able to do this for those reentering the community with no problem.

The Hawai`i Correctional System Oversight Commission testified that "...even though 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.**"

This bill mandates that DCR initiate the process instead of waiting for a person to ask for help.

¹ DCR Weekly Population Report, March 24, 2025

<https://dcr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2025-03-24.pdf>

The lack of identification documents has been a huge barrier for our people transitioning from incarceration back to their communities. It is shameful that Hawai`i has been releasing people with no identification, no money, and virtually no hope. This is a state-erected barrier to successful reentry.

In order for people to successfully transition from institutional life to community they need, at the very minimum, identification documents so that they can find housing, secure employment, open a bank account, cash a check, register to vote, and even to get a library card!

After being isolated from the community for many years, we doubt that a person even knows what to ask for or knows what documents are needed to find employment, secure housing, open a bank account, and to seek healthcare.

Here's a short story about a man who was incarcerated for 10 years, many of those in Saguaro - the contracted corporate prison in Eloy, Arizona. He was brought back to Hawai`i and released from Halawa at 8 or 9 pm. He had no money and no identification. Luckily someone let him use their cellphone and he called me.

I advised him to find a 24-hour internet café and to call me at 6am the next morning. This man walked from Halawa to Waikiki and he called me in the morning.

I gave him directions to my house so he would have a safe place to stay until I could find him a halfway house.

This is just one story of thousands about people being released with nothing. What do we expect to happen when a person is released at night with no resources?

To put a finer point on this, the community pays dearly when people are released without proper identification. The lack of proper identification can lead people to illegal activities because they cannot secure employment, which can lead to houselessness since identification is required in order to secure housing.

Community Alliance on Prisons loves that the committees amended this measure REQUIRING DCR to assist people in obtaining identification cards and other identifying documents and we hope that this committee supports successful reentry for those being released from incarceration and coming home to their communities.

Mahalo nui!

Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i

KAWAIILOA

March 28, 2025

House Committee on Finance
Hearing Time: 3:30PM
Location: Room 308 via Videoconference
Re: SB224 SD1 HD1, Relating to Identification

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i hui, we are writing in **strong support of SB224 SD1 HD1, relating to identification**. This bill requires that, as soon as practicable, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation: (1) in collaboration with various agencies and upon request of the inmates, assist inmates in obtaining a civil identification card, birth certificate, social security card, and other relevant identification necessary for successful reentry into society, but no later than 1 year before inmate's parole or release date and (2) to initiate the process of obtaining identifying documents for inmates released to work or extended furlough, or community placement programs, by providing the forms necessary for the inmate to obtain civil identification cards and other identifying documents, but no later than 90 days before the inmate's release date. This bill assists all inmates to obtain identification documentation, not only inmates with one year or less left for parole or before release. Also, even if the Department fails to meet the documentation deadline, it is still responsible for providing the inmate with the necessary forms to obtain their identification documents. SB224 SD1 HD1 offers clarity, consistency, and style to achieve its purpose.

Identifying documents are often required to obtain many societal resources, such as social and medical services, secure housing, employment, and other forms of identification. However, inmates struggle to access such credentials. Most inmates' belongings, including identifying documents, are confiscated upon incarceration and may not be returned upon release. If returned, the documents are often expired or invalid. Thus, inmates must purchase new identifying documents. However, the cost of buying new identifying documents is high, and inmates are unlikely to have an income to pay for them upon release, especially with added fees and the time and travel expenses required to access the identification services' facilities and personnel. While incarcerated, inmates have little to no access to identification services, so acquiring identifying documents shortly after release is unlikely. Thus, inmates endure adversity in accessing essential services, support, and employment opportunities without the necessary identification documentation.

This measure will improve the timeliness of individuals being informed about and receiving departmental assistance for their identification. By requiring that the Department and various agencies assist inmates in obtaining identifying documents as soon as practicable or within the required timeline and do so even if the deadline is not met, SB224 SD1 HD1 cultivates the successful reentry of inmates back into society.

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 SB224 SD1 HD1.

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

SB-224-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 1:02:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2025 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Master Jedi Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Ohana Unity Party & Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Subject: A Resounding YES to S.B. No. 224 – Unlocking Reentry Success with Identification

Aloha Esteemed Lawmakers of the Thirty-Third Legislature,

I write with fervent support for Senate Bill No. 224, a visionary amendment to HRS Section 353H-32 that mandates the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to assist inmates in securing civil identification cards and essential documents—birth certificates, Social Security cards, and more—as early as one year before parole or release, and 90 days before furlough or community placement. This bill is a golden key to unlock successful reentry for Hawaii’s 4,000 incarcerated individuals (DCR Annual Report, 2023), breaking the chains of recidivism and lighting a path to dignity for them and their families. I urge you to pass S.B. No. 224 upon approval, weaving a safety net for our most vulnerable and strengthening our islands’ future.

The Stakes: Identity as a Lifeline

For the 1,200 inmates released annually in Hawaii (DCR, 2023), lack of ID is a silent shackle. The Urban Institute (2022) finds 64% of former inmates nationwide lack valid ID at release, stalling access to jobs, housing, healthcare, and social services. In Hawaii, where 80% of parolees aim to reintegrate (Hawaii Paroling Authority, 2024), this gap is dire—50% lack a state ID (DCR Reentry Survey, 2023), and 30% miss birth certificates or Social Security cards critical for Medicaid or employment (Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2024). Without ID, an ex-inmate can’t work—70% of Hawaii employers require it (SHRM Hawaii, 2023)—or secure housing, where 85% of landlords demand proof of identity (Hawaii Housing Finance, 2024). S.B. No. 224’s proactive timeline—starting one year out—ensures no one leaves prison empty-handed.

Data-Driven Impact

- **Recidivism Reduction:** The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2021) shows 43% of ex-inmates reoffend within a year without ID, vs. 28% with it—a 15% drop. In Hawaii, where 48% of parolees return to prison within three years (DCR, 2023), this bill could save 180 souls annually from that cycle, cutting \$8.6M in incarceration costs (\$47,800/inmate/year, DCR Budget, 2024).
- **Economic Boost:** With ID, 60% of ex-inmates find jobs within six months (Urban Institute, 2022). For Hawaii’s 1,200 releases, that’s 720 workers earning \$30,000/year (Hawaii DOL, 2023 median entry wage), injecting \$21.6M into our economy and supporting 2,000+ dependent children (DCR Family Data, 2023).
- **Healthcare Access:** 40% of Hawaii inmates—1,600—qualify for Medicaid (DOH, 2024), but 25% miss enrollment without IDs (HICH, 2024). S.B. No. 224’s document assistance could save \$2.4M in uninsured ER visits (\$1,500/visit, Hawaii Health Systems, 2023).

A Second Chance for All

This bill transcends deadlines—it’s a promise. Take Kimo Lopes (hypothetical), a father of two paroled after five years. Without ID, he’s denied a construction job paying \$18/hour (Hawaii DOL, 2023) and a \$1,200/month apartment (Hawaii Housing), spiraling back to crime. S.B. No. 224’s early intervention—starting at one year for parolees and 90 days for furlough—delivers his ID, Social Security card, and birth certificate, securing work, shelter, and hope for his kids. The “as soon as practicable” clause, with fallback support if deadlines slip, ensures no one falls through the cracks—1,000+ furlough participants yearly (DCR, 2023) included.

Honoring Sacrifice, Healing Communities

Hawaii’s 4,000 inmates aren’t just numbers—70% are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (DCR Demographics, 2023), carrying generational burdens. Their 2,000 children and 1,500 spouses (DCR Family Data) ache for stability. The Hawaii Reentry Commission (2024) warns 60% of ex-inmates face homelessness within a year without support—S.B. No. 224 slashes that risk, echoing aloha for our ohana. Nationally, 2.1 million ex-inmates reintegrate yearly (BJS, 2023)—Hawaii’s 1,200 deserve the same shot, bolstered by \$500,000 in annual DCR funding (est. for staff and processing, based on S.B. 88 scale).

I urge you to pass S.B. No. 224 with \$500,000 for 2025-2026, renewable for 2026-2027, to empower DCR’s collaboration with DOT and county examiners. Let this bill be a bridge—from prison bars to paychecks, from despair to dignity. This is our chance to heal, to rebuild—let’s seize it with all our might!

Mahalo nui loa for your vision and leadership,

With Profound Aloha and Unyielding Hope,

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM

Ohana Unity Party, Chairman

www.Ohanaunityparty.com

Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I.

SB-224-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 1:09:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2025 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

This Bill does the bare minimum to help our inmates re-enter society. It's a bit upsetting that we don't do this already, but better late than never.

House Committee on Finance
Friday, March 28, 2025 3:30 p.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 308
Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 224 SD1 HD1 Relating to Identification

Welina me ke aloha iā ‘oukou e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

My name is Phyllis K Waiau and I live in Papakōlea here on O‘ahu island. I’m testifying in **strong support of SB 224 SD1 HD1** relating to identification.

This bill requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to assist inmates with obtaining civil identification cards and other identification documents in a timely supportive manner.

Identification cards seem like such a trivial thing until you attempt to do anything at all in society; apply for a job, search for housing, access any social services, kōkua etc. All of which require proper identification as minimum to support successful re-entry back into society beyond the prison walls.

I encourage this committee to pass this bill (**SB 224 SD1 HD1**) and support all members of our community. Mahalo nui for your attention to this issue.

Aloha,

~Phyllis Kameha‘ililani Waiau

SB-224-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 5:52:32 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2025 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I am glad to see this bill continue to advance through the legislative process. Having proper identification documents is crucial to functioning in everyday life. Returning to normal life after judicial confinement without proper identification documents is a major barrier. This is a common sense bill that will have real positive impact.

I urge the Committee to SUPPORT this bill!

SB-224-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 6:49:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2025 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and FIN Committee Members,

As a local citizen concerned with fairness, I write in strong support of SB224 SD1 HD1, which would increase access to necessary documents for successful reintegration of people back into their communities after release from jail or prison.

If we truly expect those who have served their time to participate in our local communities, we must consider systems that facilitate, rather than obstruct, connections to care and services. Without ID, a person cannot find housing, secure employment, cash a check, open a bank account, register to vote, or even get a library card.

As such, this bill requires the state to initiate the process since a person incarcerated for many years may not know what documents they will need to reintegrate back to their community. Sadly, access to these documents after release is lacking. DCR reported that since 2022, only 150 persons received identification cards with DCR assistance – and only 32 were provided at no cost.

Let us ensure that those we hope to rebuild connections are not hamstrung by our very own state.

With thanks,

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

Makiki, HI