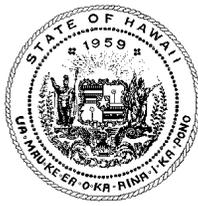


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalū Kalaima
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Sanna Muñoz
Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services
and
Programs

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 251
RELATING TO SOCIAL WORK.

By
Tommy Johnson, Director

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 and Via Video Conference

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

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) **opposes** House Bill (HB) 251, which seeks to require DCR and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop a social work training program as a pathway for incarcerated individuals to work as assistants to licensed social workers.

DCR respectfully recommends that alternative initiatives be considered, such as allocating additional funds and resources to the colleges within the State of Hawai'i to increase their capacity for any interested individuals to obtain a professional degree in social work, or to obtain a course certificate as a para-professional social service assistant.

It should be noted, neither the DCR nor the DHS has the authority to grant licenses related to social work. Therefore, as written, this measure does not appear to comply with Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Section 467E-7 as it relates to license requirements for licensed social workers, including education, examination, and experience required, and HRS Section 467E-13 as it relates to prohibited acts and penalties.

Further, DCR requests that if this measure moves forward, the effective date be extended to allow more time to coordinate with partnering agencies and that funding for this program does not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 251.

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 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 251, Relating to Social Work
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 251, Relating to Social Work, which 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.

People who have firsthand experience with the criminal justice system bring unique insights into social work as they can better understand and advocate for individuals who face systemic barriers, contributing to more effective and compassionate services. Creating a social work training program for people in prisons is an innovative and impactful way to address both individual rehabilitation and broader systemic challenges. Social work training has much potential to equip incarcerated individuals with valuable skills, such as empathy, conflict resolution, communication, and problem-solving. These skills are transferable to many professions and foster personal growth.

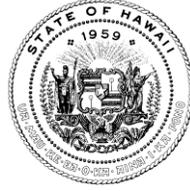
Additionally, engaging in social work training can provide a sense of purpose and direction, giving individuals the opportunity to help others and feel valued. A program like this prepares people for meaningful employment post-incarceration, reducing the risk of recidivism by setting them up for stable careers.

To ensure the program's effectiveness, the Committee may want to consider ensuring the program:

- 1) Be Accredited: Ensure that the training meets professional standards, allowing participants to pursue careers as licensed social workers or related roles.
- 2) Include Mentorship: Pair participants with experienced social workers to guide them through the training and provide real-world insights.

- 3) Address Barriers to Employment: Partner with organizations to advocate for fair hiring practices and provide job placement assistance after 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.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
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SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

DEAN I HAZAMA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
House Committee on Public Safety
Friday, January 31, 2025
10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 411 and Videoconference

On the following measure:
H.B. 251, RELATING TO SOCIAL WORK

Chair Belatti and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rochelle Araki, and I am the Executive Officer of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Professional and Vocational Licensing Division's (Division) Social Worker Licensing Program (Program). The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to require: (1) 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; (2) require progress reports on the program to the Legislature; and (3) appropriate funds.

While the Department appreciates the intent of this measure, the Department would like to ensure that any individual exploring a professional pathway in the practice of social work also comply with Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) chapter 467E which

sets forth, among other things, the requirements to be issued a license to practice social work in the State of Hawaii, as well as specific prohibited acts in connection with the use of the title of social worker with a person's name.

For the Committee's information, HRS section 467E-7 sets forth the license requirements for licensed social workers in the State, including education, examination, and experience requirements, and HRS section 467E-13 sets forth prohibited acts and penalties. HRS section 467E-13 states, in relevant part, that:

- (a) No person shall:
 - (1) Use in connection with the person's name any designation tending to imply that the person is a social worker, licensed bachelor social worker, licensed social worker, or licensed clinical social worker unless the person is duly licensed and authorized under this chapter; and
 - (2) Represent oneself as a social worker, licensed bachelor social worker, licensed social worker, or licensed clinical social worker during the time the person's license issued under this chapter is forfeited, terminated, suspended, or revoked.
- (b) Any person who violates this section shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 and each day's violation shall be deemed a separate offense. Any person engaged in the practice of social work, unless specifically exempted from licensure pursuant to HRS section 467E-6, is subject to licensure by the Program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

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 RELATING TO SOCIAL WORK.**

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

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services appreciates the intent of the measure, defers to the Departments of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) and Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA), and provides comments. If the measure moves forward, DHS respectfully requests an extended effective date to provide time for development and planning. DHS also requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: Requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR), 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.

Per the testimony of DCCA, alternative programming may be necessary until the licensing requirements address the bill's target population. Alternatively, DHS will collaborate with DCR, higher education, and other agencies and community organizations interested in developing programming for nonviolent incarcerated individuals that would promote training

January 30, 2025

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as peer specialists or other allowable community health care or substance abuse treatment tracks.

Providing fulfilling coursework to incarcerated individuals that increases their employment skills or educational interests will assist in reentry, especially since employment is a protective factor against recidivism.

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



HB251 Outreach Court
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair

Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Friday, Jan 31, 2025: 10:00: Room 411 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HB251:

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 and prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services.

There could be potential here.

A successful candidate for social work starts with education and includes:

1. Empathy, communication, organization
2. Commitment, ethics, patience
3. Active listening, critical thinking, cultural competence
4. Self-care, organization, and
5. Willingness to be trained and developed.

Once offenders are released, **successful reentry contains** these elements *if needed*:

1. **Substance use disorder treatment** or co-occurring substance abuse and
2. **Mental health treatment**
3. **Criminality programs** to change attitudes and beliefs about crime.
4. Housing
5. Family reunification
6. Employment and/or Education
7. Support from Probation/Parole
8. Case management as needed.
9. Healthcare
10. Mentoring

Reentry is a highly cost-effective investment.

HSAC appreciates the opportunity to testify and is available for questions.

HB-251

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:04:38 AM

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

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

Comments:

I support this bill