

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
**Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalua Kalaima a
Ho'oponopono Ola**
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No. _____

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 474
RELATING TO PSYCHOLOGISTS.

CORRECTED

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

Monday, January 27, 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** Senate Bill 474, which seeks to extend the period required to obtain licensure from two (2) years to ten (10) years for clinical psychologists employed as a civil servant with the DCR.

A disproportionate number of those in DCR's custody have a mental health diagnosis and of those the primary request we receive from inmate patients is the need for counseling and therapeutic relationships. Although non-licensed psychologists cannot diagnose independently, they are legally allowed to counsel and educate patients. A vocational skill unlicensed psychologists are more than capable of providing. All other diagnostic and treatment needs are ordered by our licensed mental health providers as part of a multi-disciplinary team order (MDTO).

Over the past three years DCR has been unable to retain a significant number of our clinical psychologists as they have been unable to pass the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP) within the required two-year time frame.

According to the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards, the Psy.D. pass rate for the state of Hawai'i in 2024 was 54.17% and was attempted by 31 post-doctoral psychologists. The national average failure rate of the EPPP is approximately 32% with a 3% increase since COVID. We anticipate anyone who has obtained their master's or doctorate degree through the pandemic will have missed out on critical skills and education that will continue to affect the pass rate of this exam.

The DCR has twenty-three (23) clinical psychologist positions with twenty (20) of those positions currently vacant. Of the three (3) positions filled, two (2) are unlicensed. The current 2-year licensure requirement impact's DCR's ability to retain invaluable mental health professionals who serve our inmate-residents suffering from severe mental illness as well as those in acute crisis. Last year, we were unable to retain two (2) clinical psychologists at our Kauai Community Correctional Center (KCCC) and Maui Community Correctional Center (MCCC) due to the **statutory** requirements.

This measure will allow DCR's post-doctoral-psychologists to address the critically important mental health needs of those in our custody and care while obtaining the didactic reasoning to pass this increasingly difficult licensure exam.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** SB 474.

Hawai'i Psychological Association

For a Healthy Hawai'i

P.O. Box 833
Honolulu, HI 96808

www.hawaiiopsychology.org

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Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Monday, January 27, 2025 3:00 PM
Conference Room 255 & Videoconference

RE: SB 474 RELATING TO PSYCHOLOGISTS

The Hawaii Psychological Association (HPA) respectfully opposes SB474. This bill would extend the requirement for clinical psychologists employed by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to obtain licensure within 2 years from the date of employment to 10 years. The bill would sunset on 7/1/2035.

We oppose this bill for numerous reasons:

1. Most importantly, SB474 would allow lower qualifications for psychologists who treat prisoners, establishing a premise and precedent that prisoners and potentially members of other populations are second class citizens who are not entitled to equal treatment under the law.
2. The term "clinical psychologist" can only be applied to someone who has completed a doctoral degree in a psychology program with clinical training and internships that are part of the requirement for licensure. A person lacking those credentials cannot be called a "clinical psychologist" because they would be a trainee, student or intern. Two years is ample time for a clinical psychologist to take the Hawai'i state Board of Psychology examination and/or meet the other criteria to obtain licensure.

Psychology has been consistent in supporting the rights of all Hawaii residents and protecting the basic principle of equal treatment under the law. We trust that the legislature understands and supports these basic rights. We recognize the severe shortage of psychologists, but lowering standards for Hawaii's most vulnerable populations risks causing more harm than doing good. The shortage can best be reduced by improving working conditions to make positions more attractive in order to attract well qualified applicants.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Alex Lichten, Ph.D.
HPA Legislative Action Committee Chair

SB-474

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 2:58:53 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/27/2025 3:00:00 PM

LATE

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Young	Testifying for Roar cares	Comments	In Person

Comments:

We provide live comments

LATE

SB-474

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 12:01:13 AM

Testimony for PSM on 1/27/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Veronica Moore	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair

Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Public Safety and Military Affairs Senate Committee Members

Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: January 26, 2025

RE: Upcoming Hearing for SB 474

Measure Title: RELATING TO PSYCHOLOGISTS.

Report Title: DCR; Psychologists; Licensing

To All Concerned,

In my opinion, obtaining "licensure within ten years from the date of employment" is generous but too elongated for qualified individuals selected for employment to practice psychology. As a result, I oppose Senate Bill 474. In addition, it is my opinion that as long as the individual has not obtained licensure as a psychologist or clinical psychologist, the individual should not hold the title of a psychologist which can imply that the person is licensed to practice psychology. It seems more appropriate that as long as the individual is working under the supervision of a licensed psychologist, their title should reflect that (i.e., psychology trainee, psychology intern, psychology resident, etc.). In keeping with Hawai'i Revised Statute 465-2, it should "be unlawful to represent one's self as a psychologist or engage in the practice of psychology without having first obtained a license..."

I would support this bill if: 1) the allotted time to obtain licensure were within two to four years from the date of employment, and 2) if a distinction is made between the title of the unlicensed

employee practicing psychology (i.e., psychology trainee, psychology intern, psychology resident, etc.), and the title of the employee upon obtaining licensure (i.e., psychologist).

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore