

ACT 178

H.B. NO. 2454

A Bill for an Act Relating to Hawaii Correctional Industries.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that former inmates who are gainfully employed are less likely to re-offend and have a greater chance of becoming upstanding citizens.

The legislature further finds that ninety-five percent of inmates will eventually be released from prison and that it is in the best interest of the State to facilitate the reentry of former inmates into society by providing opportunities for gainful employment.

The Hawaii correctional industries program employs several hundred inmates every year in print, furniture, canteen, and sewing shops that are located within correctional facilities as well as through outside work-lines that clean and maintain highways and byways. In this vocational rehabilitation program, former inmates who excelled in the program have great potential to serve as peer mentors and role models to the current inmates participating in the program.

The purpose of this Act is to assist former inmates as they reenter society and current inmates pursuing vocational rehabilitation by establishing a three-year pilot project within the department of public safety to authorize the administrator of the Hawaii correctional industries program, in consultation with the director of public safety, to provide full-time equivalent employment in the Hawaii correctional industries program to up to five former inmates who meet eligibility criteria.

SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the department of public safety a three-year pilot project to be known as the correctional industries former inmate employment pilot project. The administrator of the Hawaii correctional industries program, notwithstanding any laws to the contrary and in consultation with the director of public safety, shall provide full-time equivalent employment with the Hawaii correctional industries program for up to five former

inmates who meet eligibility criteria developed by the director of public safety. The department of public safety shall provide oversight of the pilot project.

(b) The pilot project shall:

- (1) Provide the former inmates an opportunity for career advancement and necessary training and job skills so they may become economically self-sufficient and productive members of society;
- (2) Provide for the safety of the former inmates, staff, and the community;
- (3) Be self-funded by the Hawaii correctional industries program;
- (4) Pay the former inmates a fair wage comparable to wages for similar work within the private sector; and
- (5) Serve the purposes of the Hawaii correctional industries program pursuant to section 354D-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

(c) The department of public safety shall evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot project annually. The evaluation shall include:

- (1) Findings as to whether the former inmates employed in the pilot project received fair and adequate wages, showed lower recidivism rates, and had reduced contact with the criminal justice system;
- (2) Findings as to whether the pilot project helped achieve the purposes of the Hawaii correctional industries program pursuant to section 354D-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes; and
- (3) Any other data and analysis the department of public safety deems necessary.

(d) Data on the conduct and efficacy of the pilot project shall be collected by service providers that work directly with former inmates and shall be submitted to the department of public safety every six months for evaluation purposes for the duration of the pilot project and twelve months after the pilot project ends.

(e) The department of public safety shall submit an annual report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular sessions of 2019, 2020, and 2021.

(f) The pilot project shall cease on July 1, 2021.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved July 10, 2018.)