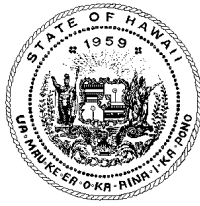


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GOVERNOR
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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
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No. _____

TESTIMONY ON SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 60, SENATE DRAFT 1
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION TO
PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON THE FINDINGS OF THE PROOF OF CONCEPT STUDY
BREAKING CYCLES: ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF REHABILITATION AND
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ON O'AHU

by
Tommy Johnson, Director
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

House Committee Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 22, 2026; 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 430 & via Videoconference

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) **supports the intent** of Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 60, Senate Draft (SD) 1, requesting an update on the *Breaking Cycles: Alternative Models of Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice on O'ahu*, proof-of-concept study (Breaking Cycles Study). DCR appreciates the Legislature's commitment to ensuring that the replacement for the O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) reflects Hawai'i's values and advances a rehabilitative, health-centered approach to corrections.

Over the past year, DCR has carefully reviewed University of Hawai'i, Community Design Center's (UHCDC) Breaking Cycles Study, along with extensive community feedback collected through talk stories, workshops, site visits, and symposiums. This work emphasized the importance of designing spaces that promote healing, dignity, and cultural grounding for those in our care.

As we proceed with the planning and design of the new OCCC, DCR is incorporating the attached core design principles highlighted in the study and community input. These include greater access to natural light, views of nature, and green open spaces, which research participants consistently identified as essential to emotional well-being, trauma reduction, and normalized daily living. Housing modules and sleeping units in the design recommendations call for sunlight, outdoor recreation yards, accessible green areas, and windows with views of the surrounding environment.

These elements will guide our planning and will be emphasized in the facility design Request for Proposals. The Breaking Cycles Study also provided detailed guidance on integrating Native Hawaiian culture and 'āina-based practices directly into the facility environment. These include restoring connections to land through gardens, lo'i, medicinal plant areas, and other culturally grounded outdoor spaces; incorporating ahu, wahi pana-connected wayfinding, and spiritual markers; and supporting cultural practices such as hula, mele, and ho'oponopono.

In every stage of planning, DCR's goal is to align the new OCCC with a rehabilitative, community-connected, culturally grounded model as envisioned by the Breaking Cycles Study. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Legislature, the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission, and community partners.

However, DCR respectfully requests the Legislature amend the request for quarterly update briefings to be semi-annual briefings. Quarterly updates would be burdensome and given the complexity of the new OCCC project, there would be little to report on a quarterly basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **supporting the intent** on SCR 60, SD 1.

Attachment.

Design Principles

Ensure safety, both physical and emotional.

Adopt a **trauma-informed, health-centered** approach.

Nurture relationships to self, family, community, land and the spiritual world.

Connect to 'aina, provide spaces to interact with the land.

Take a **strengthes-based approach** that focuses on assets.

Create opportunities for **improvement and empowerment**.

Honor diverse **cultures and identities**.

Support learning through educational programs and spaces.

Demonstrate respect for each individual, through comfortable and dignified environments.

Design Considerations

Program adjacency:

- Program-centered: a facility where program spaces, such as education or health spaces are at the center.
- Separate pre-trial sentenced populations: ensure that people are separated according to their need and risk. Misdemeanants should not be next to murderers. Separate gang members.
- Design for decommissioning: organize programs to allow for maximum flexibility, to be partially built, or to be partially decommissioned and adaptively reused.

Site design:

- Orient to central green space to provide views and access to nature.
- Progression/graduated housing to incentivize behavior.
- Enclosed courtyards for secured open space within each module.
- Access to smaller landscape areas that offer refuge or retreat.

Staff spaces:

- Establish a dedicated staff lounge to promote relaxation.
- Designate a dining room for staff meals and social interactions.
- Create a wellness courtyard for relaxation and privacy.
- Develop a walking path to encourage physical activity.
- Set up training rooms/classrooms for staff development and skill-building sessions.
- Equip a staff gym to support fitness and overall well-being.

Housing module:

- Provide treatment rooms to support rehabilitative services for mental health, substance abuse, etc.
- Incorporate glazing for natural sunlight to enter the space.
- Develop accessible green spaces to foster a connection with nature.
- Provide an outdoor recreation yard to promote physical activity.
- Integrate wall murals to create a visually uplifting and calming environment.
- Establish multi-purpose rooms for educational programs.
- Implement dynamic security with ACO stations to balance safety and positive interaction.
- Introduce varied furniture configurations to support different needs and activities.
- Design with views to the outside to reduce feelings of confinement.

Sleeping unit:

- Include windows with views of nature or the surrounding environment.
- Incorporate functional furniture to meet daily needs effectively.
- Provide personal storage to secure belongings.