



The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i

Testimony to the Thirty-Third Legislature, 2025 Regular Session

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair

Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Thursday, January 30, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 325

by

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Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 114, Relating to the Judiciary.

Purpose: Establishes positions and appropriates funds for Adult Services Probation of the First Circuit Court.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary respectfully supports the intent of this bill in establishing permanent positions within the Adult Client Services Branch (ACSB). In June 2024, the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) published National Standards for Community Supervision which indicated that the optimal caseload distribution according to risk level is Intensive 20:1, Moderate to High Risk 50:1, Low Risk 200:1, and Administrative no limit suggested. Currently, ACSB has made efforts to align with the National Standards recommended by the APPA; however, these standards are difficult to achieve with current caseload sizes.

Currently, the probation officers in the First Circuit supervise a diverse caseload which are comprised of multiple types of cases that include intensive risk to administrative risk cases. The standards are unattainable with the current staffing at ACSB. Therefore, these additional positions would help ACSB move towards aligning with the recommended national best practice standards for community supervision.



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The APPA National Standards for Community Supervision made the following commentaries that support this proposal for more staffing, “One study, for example, evaluated the introduction of reduced caseloads – approximately 54 medium-to-high-risk individuals per officer – in an agency with officers who were fully trained in evidence-based practices. The results showed that recidivism fell by 30% where agencies have redistributed caseloads to ensure smaller caseloads of higher-risk individuals” (APPA, pg. 77). Similarly, “Research has confirmed that moderate to high-risk persons on probation on a 50:1 caseload received significantly more office sessions, field visits, employer contacts, telephone check-ins, and substance use disorder and mental health treatment. As a consequence of receiving more services, individuals also had significantly better probation outcomes, including fewer positive drug tests and other technical violations” (APPA, Pg. 78). Reference: Jalbert, Sarah Kuck. 2012. “Reduced Caseloads Improve Probation Outcomes.” *Journal of Crime and Justice* 35 (2): 221-38.

The Judiciary respectfully requests that Section 1 of the bill as it relates to establishing permanent positions in adult services probation of the first circuit court be amended in the following manner:

- (1) \$73,836 each for eight full-time equivalent (8.0 FTE) probation officer positions;
- (2) \$50,880 each for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) social worker assistant position; and
- (3) \$48,936 each for two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) clerk positions

The request to amend the positions that would be established by this bill reflect the current needs of ACSB to move towards the recommended national best practice standards for community supervision.

This request does not supplant the Judiciary’s other existing funding and budget requests.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 114.