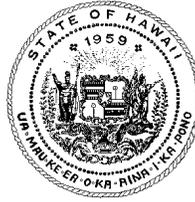


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'AINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
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a Ho'oponopono Ola*
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TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
Deputy Director
Administration

Deputy Director
Correctional Institutions

Sanna Muñoz
Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services
and
Programs

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1263
RELATING TO CORRECTIONS.

by
Tommy Johnson,

House Committee on Public Safety
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 5, 2025; 8:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 411, Via Video Conference

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

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) opposes House Bill (HB) 1263, which seeks to enact a moratorium from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2028, barring the state from entering into a public – private partnership to plan, finance, develop, or construct a new correctional facility in the State, including any and all other activities relating to required planning, developing, building and financing a new correctional facility. As written, this measure also seeks to require the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) to create a non-paid criminal justice diversion task force to work collaboratively on several issues related to the criminal justice system and seeks an unspecified amount of funding to carry out the provision of this measure.

HB 1263 is flawed and contains inaccurate information in several areas. As an example, Section 1 on page 2, Lines 13 – 15 erroneously states that 86% of those incarcerated need substance abuse treatment. While many of those incarcerated do have substance abuse use issues, they do not represent 86% of the incarcerated population. Likewise, Section 1 on page 3, lines 3 15 relays

information provided to the legislature by the HCSOC from a draft report prepared for the DCR by the University of Hawaii's Community Design Center (UHCDC), which does not recommend a pause or halt to the planning and design of the OCCC replacement project. Also, the language in this section is misleading. In fact, this point was clarified by Cathi Schar, who headed the UH CDC efforts on behalf of the DCR during an informational briefing before this very same committee on Monday, February 3, 2025.

This measure seeks to delay a process that was started decades ago to replace OCCC and only recently gained momentum. The initial recommendation to replace OCCC was included in the department's 1998 master plan and has been included in each master plan and other reports since that time. Any further delay will serve to cost the taxpayers more. If OCCC had been built in 2018 as once again recommended, the cost was estimated to be approximately \$525 million. The latest estimate to replace OCCC has risen to approximately \$937 million, which represents over 87% increased costs. Every month this critically needed project is delayed costs the state and taxpayers between \$3.5 and \$5 million depending on fluctuating construction escalation and material costs. The proposed delay outlined in this measure could potentially add more than \$200 million to the current estimate of \$937 million to replace OCCC.

Further, parts of OCCC are over 110 years old and the facility is well past its useful life. It is old, antiquated, and not designed to provide rehabilitative, educational, substance nor mental health treatment services. Due to decades of underfunding and deferred critical maintenance, the living conditions for those incarcerated there and the working conditions of our staff can only be described as abhorrent. Further delays risk federal intervention, which would prove to be considerably more costly to the state and taxpayers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 1263.

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 1263, Relating to Corrections
Hearing: Wednesday, February 5, 2025; 8:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 411

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

The Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) **submits comments** on House Bill 1263, Relating to Corrections, which establishes a moratorium on the issuance of a request for proposal and construction of any new or expanded correctional facility from 7/1/2025 to 6/30/2028, including the planned construction of a new facility to replace the existing Oahu community correctional center.

Attached is a letter submitted to the Governor regarding the Commission's urgent call for a system-wide plan before proceeding with new jail construction.

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.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



MARK PATTERSON
CHAIR

CHRISTIN M. JOHNSON
OVERSIGHT COORDINATOR

COMMISSIONERS
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January 3, 2025

The Honorable Josh Green, MD
Governor, State of Hawaii
Executive Chambers
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Members of the Hawaii State Legislature
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Urgent Call for a System-Wide Plan Before Proceeding with New Jail Construction

Dear Governor Green and Esteemed Members of the Hawaii State Legislature,

The Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC, the Commission) writes to express both its conditional support for a new jail on Oahu, contingent upon adherence to the University of Hawaii Community Design Center's (UHCDC) *Breaking Cycles: An Alternative Model for Rehabilitation & Restorative Justice* report, and the Commission's profound concern about the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (DCR) narrow focus on constructing a facility without addressing critical deficiencies in the broader correctional system.

While the Commission acknowledges the pressing need to replace the outdated and inadequate O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC), we believe this can only be successful if situated within a comprehensive, system-wide plan that aligns with evidence-based rehabilitative practices. The *Breaking Cycles* report offers transformative recommendations for facility design, but these must be integrated with a robust operational strategy that addresses Hawaii's long-standing systemic challenges, including statewide diversion efforts, homelessness, mental health care, medical services within the facilities, and programs promoting rehabilitation, reentry, and reintegration.

Reasons for a Strategic Pause in Jail Planning

1. System-Wide Gaps in Rehabilitative Practices:

For the past two years, the Commission has continuously presented issues that have yet to be addressed by the Department. Specifically, the Commission is concerned regarding the lack of programming space in all jails, lack of adequate mental health treatment and care, lack of compassionate healthcare services, and lack of programs, services, and recreation that provide out-of-cell time. A new facility alone will not resolve systemic issues without incorporating statewide:

- Evidence-based and culturally competent rehabilitation programs that encourage out-of-cell time.
- Mental health and medical services tailored to Hawaii's population.
- Reintegration programs that include correctional industries, vocational training, and life skills education.
- Faith-based and social engagement opportunities that promote community reintegration including ample in person, contact visitation opportunities with friends and family.
- Robust partnerships with community service providers and volunteers to enhance in-reach services, mentorship, and post-release support.

Additionally, the Commission continuously hears from the community that many do not believe the DCR can create the rehabilitative type of facility outlined in the *Breaking Cycles* report, as there is no track record to inspire confidence in the Department's ability to deliver on these transformative goals.

2. Inadequate Alignment with *Breaking Cycles* Recommendations:

The *Breaking Cycles* report emphasizes trauma-informed design, restorative justice principles, and culturally relevant programming. The Department, however, has not committed to embedding the *Breaking Cycles* recommendations into all planning processes. Instead, during community meetings, the Department has given a half-hazard commitment to going through the report and pulling pieces that *might* work with current plans. Proceeding without fully embedding these recommendations into facility planning risks replicating the failures of the current system and wasting taxpayer funds.

3. The Need for a Holistic Approach to Corrections and Justice System Reform:

Constructing a jail without simultaneously reforming the corrections system perpetuates a reactive approach to incarceration. Hawaii needs a proactive plan that incorporates diversion programs, robust reentry strategies, and services and treatment addressing the underlying issues that lead to incarceration. Hawaii's juvenile system is a key example of the need for proactive reform.

System-wide initiatives, including the collection and sharing of data, are essential to support effective diversion efforts. Collecting data on key issues, such as the prevalence of homelessness and mental health challenges among the DCR population is critical for serving the population, identifying needs, forming partnerships with service providers, and addressing gaps in resources. This data is not only vital for guiding resource allocation and facility planning but also for ensuring that the new facility is appropriately sized.

Additionally, system-wide efforts should prioritize decreasing pretrial detention times, particularly for individuals held for extended periods. Data from the Commission's 2024 tour of OCCC revealed that of the 563 individuals held pretrial on felony charges, 220 had been in custody for more than six months, accounting for approximately 23% of the facility's 954-bed capacity. Reducing pretrial detention times to six months or less for these individuals could lower the number of beds needed by nearly one-fourth, significantly easing overcrowding and improving overall system efficiency.

Conditional Support for New Jail Construction

The Commission supports the construction of a new facility only if it follows the design and operational guidelines set forth in the *Breaking Cycles* report while also addressing systemic issues noted above. Therefore, the Commission advocates for a pause in planning to ensure that the DCR develops a comprehensive system-wide plan addressing the following:

Immediate Implementation of Rehabilitative Practices

Begin implementing a rehabilitative paradigm now rather than waiting for a new facility. Efforts to demonstrate commitment to these priorities must start immediately, before moving forward with plans for a new facility, even within the constraints of limited space and outdated facility designs, to show the State and community that meaningful change is possible and underway.

For example, the following recommendations from the most recent Commission report on OCCC highlight actionable changes that can be implemented immediately without requiring new construction:

- Allow natural light by removing wood coverings from all cell windows,
- Restore contact visits,
- Expand programming opportunities,
- Expand furlough utilization at OCCC,
- Install shade for recreation cages in the holding unit,
- Investigate and address concerns raised by people in custody at OCCC, including roaches in cells and difficulties accessing bail calls, and
- Ensure regular access to books, reading materials, legal calls, mail, and recreation for those in the holding unit, including individuals in disciplinary segregation.

These initiatives do not require a new facility and can significantly improve conditions and outcomes in the interim, demonstrating the DCR's commitment to meaningful reform and its ability to effect meaningful change within its current capacity. Additionally, DCR must fully integrate the recommendations outlined in the *Breaking Cycles* report into all planning processes, facility design, and outcome measures.

Recommendations from Breaking Cycles Report into Jail Planning Process

Fully integrate the recommendations outlined in the *Breaking Cycles* report into all planning processes, facility design, and outcome measures. This includes the following system-wide recommendations:

- **Mental and Physical Health Care:** Embedding accessible, high-quality care for individuals in custody, including trauma-informed approaches.
- **Programs, Education, Job Training, and Services:** Embedding evidence-based rehabilitation programs, vocational training, recreation, faith-based initiatives, and social engagement to facilitate successful reintegration that are in *all* facilities, not only low-level prisons.
- **Incorporate Hawaiian Cultural-Based Programs:** Ensuring Hawaiian cultural-based programs are integrated into all facilities to support culture, healing, and community reintegration.
- **Train All Staff in Rehabilitative Practices and Trauma-Informed Care:** Providing training to support the Department's transition to a rehabilitative model, fostering a more compassionate and effective correctional environment aligned with the goals of a therapeutic model of corrections and healing.
- **Enhance Preparation for Successful Release and Transition to the Community:** Providing individuals in custody with the skills, resources, and support necessary for successful reintegration into the community.

Data Collection and Analysis

Collect and report data on the prevalence of homelessness and mental health issues among the incarcerated population at least monthly to inform diversion efforts and service provision. This data will help determine the size and scope of the new facility and identify gaps in community-based resources necessary for successful diversion.

Collaborative Efforts to Reduce Pretrial Detention

Work collaboratively to increase participation in Oahu diversion programs to reduce reliance on incarceration and address root causes, with opportunities to expand beyond current efforts by implementing new and innovative diversion initiatives. This could be done, for example, by having DCR initiate collaboration with justice-system partners beginning on Oahu, including the Judiciary, Public Defender, Prosecuting Attorney, and defense attorneys, to decrease pretrial detention times to six months.

Community-Based Alternatives

Enhance diversion programs and community partnerships to reduce reliance on incarceration. Integrating health, housing, and social services into correctional planning will mitigate recidivism and promote public safety.

Conclusion

The Commission strongly urges the Governor and Legislature to direct the DCR to pause its current planning process until a comprehensive system plan is in place. This pause will ensure that Hawaii's corrections system transforms into one that truly rehabilitates and reintegrates individuals while upholding the values of equity, safety, and community well-being.

The Commission remains steadfast in our commitment to supporting solutions that address the needs of all stakeholders, and we believe this approach represents the most effective path forward. The *Breaking Cycles* report provides the vision, but systemic reform requires intentional planning and execution. We urge you to act decisively to ensure these critical steps are taken.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Patterson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark Patterson
Chair

**DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
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**THE HONORABLE, CHAIR DELLA AU BELATTI
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawai'i**

February 5, 2025

RE: H.B. 1263; RELATING TO CORRECTIONS.

Chair Au Belatti, Vice-Chair Iwamoto and members of the Senate/House Committee on Public Safety, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu ("Department") submits the following testimony in **opposition** of H.B. 1263.

The stated purpose of H.B. 1263 is to put a moratorium on the building of a new jail so that the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation can now come up with a plan to build a new jail that follows a systems approach to jail planning. This moratorium is requested after seven years of planning at an expense of \$25,000,000 of taxpayers' money. Both a moratorium and the creation and work of a new task force will take time. Delaying the building of a new jail will cost the taxpayers more money in the long run as expenses for the services and materials increase over time.

While the Department agrees with preamble of this bill, that a systems approach to jail planning is best practices and with the research cited by the Vera Institute of Justice showing that if planners fail to address the practices and policies that are driving the jail population, stopping the planning and subsequent building of a new jail at this point will only exacerbate the problem of overcrowding that now exists. In addition to a moratorium, this bill seeks to create a criminal diversion task force.

The preamble of this bill cites that as of December 2024, there were 947 individuals in jail; that between 2021 to 2023, 30-40% of individuals incarcerated were homeless prior to entry; and 86% of the state's corrections population requires substance abuse treatment. However creating a task force and putting a moratorium on building a new jail will not improve these statistics. Again it will only make them worse as there will not be any place to house individuals who are accused of violating the law while they await disposition of their cases. What often occurs when a person, who is homeless prior to entry and most likely in need of substance abuse and/or mental health services, is released pending disposition of their case, is that individual

either does not show up for the next court hearing, or gets arrested or cited for a new offense, placing them right back into a correctional facility. This revolving door is frustrating for the citizens of the state who have already paid \$25,000,000 to plan a new jail.

The Department advocates that we continue to fund the planning and building of a new jail and begin the request for proposal process to secure a vendor to begin the work. As the new modules of a new jail are completed, incarcerated individuals can be moved to those modules. The remaining modules of the former jail can then be closed.

Also during this time, the state can increase the resources already provided to jail diversion programs such as LEAD, the "Letting Everyone Advance with Dignity", formerly known as the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program. This program is currently in place and is designed to divert low-level offenders from citation and/or arrest to case management and connection with social service providers. Although this program is not intended to reduce homelessness, it does reach people who are homeless or at risk for homelessness.¹ This program addresses exactly the situation that is the reason behind the stated purpose of this bill.

The pilot for HOPE Pretrial showed that, compared to a control group on suspended release as usual, the HOPE group were arrested for a new case 40% less often, tested positive for drugs 21-30% less often, and had their supervised release revoked 60% less. More resources should be focused on programs, like LEAD and HOPE, that are already in place as well as developing new programs to address the needs of this population, **while the new jail is being built.**

Furthermore, spending resources to create a task force, that does not already exist to develop jail diversion programs when a program already exists, seems to be a poor use of taxpayer money and only serve to cause delay of the solution that is badly needed—a new jail to house the increasing number of individuals in this population. In addition, a task force dedicated to jail diversion is not going to address the underlying reasons driving our jail population as cited by the Vera Institute of Justice. Jail diversion does not address the underlying reasons for homelessness, substance abuse, and why Native Hawaiians are disproportionately represented in incarceration statistics. Those issues are multi-pronged, meaning that the problems do not just lie in jail diversion, but in the lack of affordable housing and appropriate health and human services that are targeted to address these issues. These are just two entry points, among others, that need to be addressed to make a dent and improve the lives of all our citizens.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu **opposes** the passage of H.B. 1263. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

¹ See <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/ohana-zones/law-enforcement-assisted-diversion-lead/>

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STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

February 4, 2025

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H.B. No. 1263: RELATING TO CORRECTIONS

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

The Office of the Public Defender **strongly supports HB 1263.**

The Office of the Public Defender represents most of the individuals incarcerated at the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) and at the other correctional facilities state-wide. We have first-hand knowledge of the deficiencies in the current facilities and have grave concerns with the plans to build an updated OCCC that does not follow a systems approach nor is focused on a therapeutic and rehabilitative model.

While we acknowledge the need to build an updated facility, simply modernizing the new OCCC while ignoring best practices will only continue the cycle of over-incarceration and recidivism. In 2016, House Concurrent Resolution No. 85, HD 2, SD 1, requested the Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court establish a task force to recommend improvements to Hawaii's correctional facilities. In 2018, the task force published their findings and recommendations in their Final Report titled "Creating Better Outcomes, Safer Communities."¹

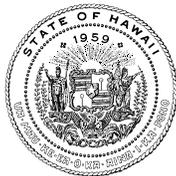
In part, the task force report found that "[c]ollaboration and community input is a best practice" and that we should "[t]ransition to a more effective and sustainable model that focuses on rehabilitation rather than punishment." Pausing the current planning process to ensure these goals are met is imperative to building a new facility that will meet the needs of the incarcerated and of the community.

¹ www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HCR-85_task_force_final_report.pdf

The establishment of a criminal justice diversion task force will facilitate community input, ensure transparency, and prevent the build of a new facility that is not aligned with criminal justice reform. We respectfully request that the bill be amended to include on the task force a representative from the Office of the Public Defender given our close connection with the incarcerated population and our consistent presence in the correctional facilities state-wide.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



KEITH A. REGAN
COMPTROLLER
KA LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

MEOH-LENG SILLIMAN
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES | KA 'OIHANA LOIHELU A LAWELAWE LAULĀ
P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0119

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
OF
KEITH A. REGAN, COMPTROLLER
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES
TO THE

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

LATE

FEBRUARY 5, 2025, 8:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 411 AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, STATE CAPITOL

H.B. 1263

RELATING TO CORRECTIONS

Chair Bellati, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on H.B. 1263. The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) **opposes** the portion of this bill which proposes establishment of a moratorium on the issuance of a request for proposal and construction of any new or expanded correctional facility from 7/1/2025 to 6/30/2028, including the planned construction of a new facility to replace the existing Oahu community correctional center.

While we understand the intent of this bill, we believe that its implementation may present unintended challenges, including potential cost increases and project delays. Some of the assumptions in the bill may not fully reflect the ongoing planning efforts and flexible approach being taken to meet future needs. Specifically, work for replacement

of the existing Oahu Community Correctional Center includes keeping population forecasts current and mindful of all potential future impacts to jail populations and program needs to provide the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) necessary flexibility in design to best meet its future demands far into the future. This includes whole-of-life facility planning for implementation of future maintenance of, and scheduled capital improvements to, the new facility to ensure this necessary asset continues to meet DCR's critical mission and vision needs. This is anticipated to be achieved via the design, build, finance, and maintain procurement process which is currently used in many successful correctional facilities nationwide. This process would be competitive, fair, transparent, and beneficial to the state. DCR and DAGS are committed to moving forward collaboratively with key stakeholders and the community throughout the procurement, design, construction, and operational phases of the new facility, bringing our industry partners into the fold at the earliest stages appropriate. In practice, this would be even more transparent than traditional design-bid-build (low-bid) and design-build projects.

A moratorium from 7/1/2025 to 6/30/2028, which coincides with the established life of the proposed criminal justice diversion task force, is unnecessary, as our earliest projections for the start of construction of a new Oahu jail is within the year 2029, with completion no sooner than 2031. DAGS and DCR anticipate on-going participation in meetings conducted by both the Hawaii correctional system oversight commission and the proposed task force, as well as continued work with the industry, during this period, which will afford our team with the ability to adapt our designs to implement any merited revisions while minimizing delays to our anticipated construction completion.

This same moratorium, if implemented, would be disruptive, costly, and disadvantageous to the state by creating a break in our continuing efforts to provide the long overdue replacement of the obsolete, inefficient, and deteriorated Oahu community correctional center as effectively as possible. Unlike a simple pause in a project, a multi-year moratorium could create significant disruptions that may extend beyond the proposed timeframe for the following reasons:

- Effective development of the necessary procurement instrument requires continuous update on industry trends and impacts, population forecasts, and programmatic requirements. This work has been on-going and cumulative in nature. Stopping all such updates for three years would essentially require starting from scratch, thereby negating all programmatic efforts to date, and increasing necessary funding to duplicate efforts and rebuild the knowledge lost.
- Key members of the current team may no longer be available due to reassignment, movement, and /or retirement of staffing within the state and our consultants. A moratorium on all forward-moving efforts would create an irrecoverable break in project knowledge with no transition between current and future team members and require costly reeducation and work duplication in both dollars and time.
- As a result, the target start and completion of new facility construction would be delayed far longer than the three year moratorium – beyond 2032 through 2034.

We fully recognize the importance of addressing criminal justice system reforms and ensuring the best possible correctional environment. Continuing progress on this project will allow for necessary adjustments while avoiding unnecessary delays. This is the most effective and advantageous way to assist DCR with reducing recidivism and enhancing the safety and security of our communities.

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



Dear Chair Belatti and Vice Chair Iwamoto,

The Reimagining Public Safety in Hawai'i Coalition strongly supports HB 1263. The state should pause any further planning and construction of the \$1 billion 1300 bed super jail being proposed by DCR. It would be the most expensive state funded project in Hawaii's history, and continue the same failed approach to public safety.

Voting for a pause does not mean that no planning or further action will take place. It means a pause on the current misguided DCR proposal, and pivoting toward developing a more fiscally responsible and appropriate solution that reflects the current mandate to divert and significantly reduce the jail population. The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission recently voted to support a pause, and sent the Governor a letter outlining similar reasons.

The following facts underline why HB 1263 should be passed:

- Currently, at least 40% of all people in jail in Hawai'i are houseless, and many more are suffering from mental health issues and addiction. 60 percent are pretrial and in jail simply because they cannot afford bail.
- Simply put, most people sitting in jail right now shouldn't be there.
- Jails have become place where we warehouse our most vulnerable residents and top DCR officials have openly acknowledged this approach is the least effective-most expensive option.
- The problems on our streets are primarily driven by both a housing and public health crisis, especially mental illness and substance addiction.

- The Governor recently acknowledged that we cannot arrest and jail our way out of these problems.
- Research has shown, if a bigger jail is built judges will fill the beds. There is no pressure to divert.
- Over the past few years, a robust diversion mandate has gained substantial support across the state. Vulnerable residents will be diverted out of jail and into treatment and housing, which will significantly decrease the jail population.
- Decarceration through diversion and pre trial reform eliminates need for new and bigger jail.
- The current DCR proposal for a \$1 billion superjail completely ignores this fact.
- We need to hit pause on this wrongheaded proposal, and pivot toward developing an appropriate solution that reflects the current mandate to divert and significantly reduce the jail population.
- Key justice system actors across the state, from police to judges to prosecutors have been meeting and agree that Hawaii has a robust diversion mandate, but that it is failing due to severe underfunding of necessary diversion infrastructure. From severe staffing shortages to severe shortage of places to divert people. The question, “Divert to where”?
- We need significant investment in places to divert people such as 24/7 supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes, clean and sober housing.
- However, the State has limited funds, and cannot afford both a \$1 billion jail and to adequately fund diversion infrastructure.
- There are far less costly solutions that can still effectively address the issues at OCCC. Fulton County recently abandoned plans for a similar \$1.7 billion super jail, and will instead renovate the existing facility for a cost of \$250 million.

Mahalo for passing HB1263

Liam Chinn

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:09:21 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luanna Peterson	Reimagining Public Safety	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to urge you to schedule a hearing for HB1263 before the Triple Filing Deadline.

The Reimagining Public Safety in Hawai'i Coalition strongly supports HB1263. The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (DCR) proposal for a \$1 billion, 1,300-bed super jail would be the most expensive state-funded project in Hawai'i's history—continuing a failed approach to public safety. A pause on this project does not mean no further action; rather, it ensures that we develop a more fiscally responsible and effective solution aligned with the state's commitment to diversion and decarceration.

Key Reasons to Support HB1263:

- 40% of people in jail in Hawai'i are houseless, and many more suffer from mental health and addiction issues.
- 60% are pretrial detainees, jailed simply because they cannot afford bail.
- Jails have become de facto warehouses for our most vulnerable residents, a fact openly acknowledged by DCR officials.
- Research shows that if a bigger jail is built, judges will fill the beds, eliminating pressure to invest in diversion.
- The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission supports a pause and has urged the Governor to take action.
- Other jurisdictions, like Fulton County, GA, have abandoned similar super jail plans in favor of renovating existing facilities for a fraction of the cost.

The state must prioritize investment in alternatives, including 24/7 supportive housing, group homes, and sober living facilities—not an expensive, ineffective incarceration model.

I strongly urge you to schedule a hearing for these bills before the deadline to allow for a meaningful discussion on fiscal responsibility, public safety, and justice reform in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your leadership and consideration,

Luanna Peterson

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:59:00 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marissa Commey	Reimagining Public Safety in Hawai'i Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Reimagining Public Safety in Hawai'i Coalition strongly supports HB 1263 because Hawai'i does not need a \$1 billion, 1,300-bed super jail—it needs real, evidence-based solutions. Currently, nearly 60% of people in jail are pretrial, held simply because they cannot afford bail, and at least 40% are houseless. Jails have become a costly and ineffective way to warehouse our most vulnerable residents, a reality even top DCR officials have acknowledged. The Governor himself has stated that we cannot arrest and jail our way out of issues like homelessness, mental illness, and substance addiction. A pause on this project does not mean inaction; it means reconsidering the approach and investing in solutions that actually promote public safety. Research has shown that if a bigger jail is built, it will be filled, removing the incentive to invest in diversion and alternatives. As Charlie Munger famously said, “Show me your incentives, and I’ll show you your outcomes.” Expanding the jail system would create incentives for more incarceration, rather than addressing the root causes of crime. Passing HB 1263 ensures that Hawai'i moves toward a more just, effective, and fiscally responsible public safety system.

LATE

As a member of the Reimagining Public Safety in Hawai'i Coalition, I strongly support HB 1263. The state should pause any further planning and construction of the \$1 billion 1300 bed super jail being proposed by DCR. It would be the most expensive state funded project in Hawaii's history and continue the same failed approach to public safety.

Voting for a pause does not mean that no planning or further action will take place. It means a pause on the current misguided DCR proposal and pivoting toward developing a more fiscally responsible and appropriate solution that reflects the current mandate to divert and significantly reduce the jail population. The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission recently voted to support a pause, and sent the Governor a letter outlining similar reasons.

The following facts underline why HB 1263 should be passed:

- Currently, at least 40% of all people in jail in Hawai'i are houseless, and many more are suffering from mental health issues and addiction. 60 percent are pretrial and in jail simply because they cannot afford bail.
- Simply put, most people sitting in jail right now shouldn't be there.
- Jails have become the place where we warehouse our most vulnerable residents and top DCR officials have openly acknowledged this approach is the least effective-most expensive option.
- The problems on our streets are primarily driven by both a housing and public health crisis, especially mental illness and substance addiction.
- The Governor recently acknowledged that we cannot arrest and jail our way out of these problems.
- Research shows that if a bigger jail is built judges will fill the beds. There is no pressure to divert.
- Over the past few years, a robust diversion mandate has gained substantial support across the state. Vulnerable residents will be diverted out of jail and into treatment and housing, which will significantly decrease the jail population.
- Decarcerating through diversion and pretrial reform eliminates need for new and bigger jail.
- The current DCR proposal for a \$1 billion super jail completely ignores this fact.
- We need to pause on this wrongheaded proposal, and pivot toward developing an appropriate solution that reflects the current mandate to divert and significantly reduce the jail population.
- Key justice system actors across the state, from police to judges to prosecutors have been meeting and agreed that Hawaii has a robust diversion mandate, but that it is failing due to severe underfunding of necessary diversion infrastructure. From severe staffing shortages to severe shortage of places to divert people. The question, "Divert to where"?
- We need significant investment in places to divert people such as 24/7 supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes, clean and sober housing.
- However, the State has limited funds and cannot afford both a \$1 billion jail and to adequately fund diversion infrastructure.

- There are far less costly solutions that can still effectively address the issues at OCCC. Fulton County recently abandoned plans for a similar \$1.7 billion super jail and will instead renovate the existing facility for a cost of \$250 million.

I urge you to support HB 1263.

Thank you,

Carla Allison - Honolulu

Honolulu Police Commission Task Force and Reimagining Public Safety in Hawai'i Coalition

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / kat.caphi@gmail.com

Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor



COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair

Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Room 411 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

8:30 AM

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 1263 - MORATORIUM ON THE PROPOSED OCCC

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai`i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 3,697 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars¹ and under the “care and custody” of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on any given day. We are always mindful that 937 - 49% - of Hawai`i’s imprisoned male population are serving their sentences abroad -- thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homeur s and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates this opportunity to share our **strong support for HB 1263** that establishes a moratorium on the issuance of a request for proposal and construction of any new or expanded correctional facility from 7/1/2025 to 6/30/2028, including the planned construction of a new facility to replace the existing Oahu community correctional center and establishes a criminal justice diversion task force. Appropriates funds.

¹ DCR Weekly Population Report, January 20, 2025

<https://dcr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2025-01-20.pdf>

Building a correctional facility, in this case a jail on an island, takes thinking and planning that must include who will live and work in the jail, what kinds of services will be needed? How much space will be required for these classes, programs, and services to thrive? What will the living quarters be like? Will they mimic the outside world so that incarcerated persons live in a more normalized environment, which makes reentry less intimidating?

We remember when Saguaro opened in Arizona in July, 2007. After a few months CAP started receiving calls about flooding in some of the cells. Apparently, the men reported that the drains were too high and the water was running from the shower into the cellblock. I called the then Deputy Director who assured us that he would investigate. After a while he got back to CAP saying that there was no problem. A few months after that CAP received calls that the showers were being dug up. The drains were fixed and the flooding stopped. This is not an unusual story with CCA/CoreCivic and P3s. They seem to build on the cheap and leave the client with a mess. CAVEAT EMPTOR!

With a moratorium and really and truly engaging the community -- **with real information, not public relations** -- a better outcome will be found. As the bill states, there is a systems approach to jail planning that is a best practice. If Hawai`i doesn't address the reason that so many people, who were homeless when they were arrested, are incarcerated we will never emerge from this vicious and vengeful cycle that has served no one but the vendors who found a population of incarcerated people and their families to exploit.

Community Alliance on Prisons respectfully asks the committee to think about what Hawai`i is doing: continuing the same practice for over 100 years with lots of proof that it doesn't work and then pouring more resources into the same thing. Why would we do that when we know there are better ways to accomplish safe, healthy, and just communities across Hawai`i nei.

Mahalo for the chance to share our thoughts on this expensive boondoggle that is known in the community as JAIL FAIL.



COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY
Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair
Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, February 5, 2025
TIME: 8:30 AM
PLACE: Conference Room 411 & Videoconference
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 1263 RELATING TO CORRECTIONS

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

Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ), incorporated as a non-profit in 1980, has worked with state prisons for over 20 years developing, providing, researching and reporting on pilot projects to determine evidence-based interventions to assist those affected by wrongdoing and injustice, and to increase criminal desistance. HFRJ strongly supports HB 1263, which calls for a three-year moratorium on new jail and prison construction. Our experience has shown that incarceration does not address the underlying causes of crime. Instead, investment in rehabilitation, diversion and [restorative justice programs](#) has proven more effective in reducing recidivism and supporting successful reintegration into the community.

Hawai'i's correctional system has long struggled with inadequate rehabilitative services and an overreliance on incarceration. We have an urgent need for comprehensive justice reform, using evidence-based alternatives that promote community safety for reducing incarceration rates. Without addressing these systemic gaps, expanding jails and prisons will only [perpetuate existing failures rather than solve the root issues](#) driving incarceration.

A three-year moratorium will provide needed time for implementing rehabilitative practices, improving data collection and analysis, and fostering collaboration among justice stakeholders. It will also provide the opportunity to develop and evaluate sustainable alternatives to pretrial detention, ensuring individuals are not held in custody simply due to financial inability to post bail.

We urge you to pass HB 1263 to redirect Hawai'i's criminal justice system toward a more effective, humane, and fiscally responsible approach that prioritizes rehabilitation and community well-being over incarceration.

Mahalo for your public service. Please contact me if you needed further information about our support for this bill: lorenn@hawaiifriends.org and 808 218 3712.

Aloha,

Lorenn Walker, JD, MPH
Director, HFRJ



February 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice-Chair
Honorable Members of the House Committee on Public Safety

Subject: House Bill 1263, Relating to Corrections
Hearing, Tuesday February 4, 2025

Aloha e Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Jamee Māhealani Miller, I am the co-executive director of 'Ekolu Mea Nui, a Native Hawaiian, justice-impacted led non-profit organization. We are dedicated to addressing the disproportionate incarceration of Native Hawaiians. Our work is rooted in transformation—shifting from punishment to healing and alternatives to incarceration by reconnecting justice-involved individuals to culture, 'āina, and community support. We are also a member of the Reimagining Public Safety in Hawaii Coalition. 'Ekolu Mea Nui strongly supports HB 1263, which calls for a necessary pause on the proposed \$1 billion super jail. This is not a solution—it is an outdated, costly approach that ignores the growing support and policy efforts aimed at reducing incarceration and expanding alternatives to jail. Instead, investing in real public safety solutions that address the root causes of incarceration are needed.

Jails are not the answer to houselessness, mental illness, and addiction. Yet, 40% of Hawai'i's incarcerated population are houseless, and 60% are pretrial detainees who simply cannot afford bail. Hawaii would benefit if we pivot from incarceration to solutions that work:

- 24/7 supportive housing for justice-involved individuals.
- Group homes and clean and sober housing.
- Culturally rooted rehabilitation and reentry programs.

Simply put, we cannot justify spending \$1 billion on a new jail while failing to invest in the diversion infrastructure needed to address the root causes of incarceration. Other states have abandoned similar projects in favor of more effective, cost-efficient alternatives. As the first state to declare itself a **trauma-informed care** one, Hawai'i must align its actions with its said values. Now is the time to prioritize solutions that heal, not harm. We urge you to pass HB 1263 and prioritize solutions that heal our communities and create true public safety.

Mahalo for your time,

Jamee Māhealani Miller, EdD, LSW
Co-Executive Director
(808)430-3380



House Committee on Public Safety

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: HB1263 Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 8:30am; Conference Room 411

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

HAPA is submitting testimony in **STRONG Support of HB1263**, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as one of the most expensive state funded projects in Hawai'i's history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

We desperately need a strategic pause on the construction of the new O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) due to system wide gaps in rehabilitation practices and to allow for immediate implementation of rehabilitative practices, data collection and analysis, and collaborative efforts to reduce pretrial detention.

We must instead invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

HAPA is a member of the Reimagining Public Safety Coalition, A broad coalition of Hawai'i-based organizations and local residents, each bringing valuable lived experience and expertise from various sectors such as public health, the criminal legal system, economic revitalization, restorative justice, police oversight and accountability, mental health, street medicine, harm reduction, and more. This group is dedicated to reshaping Hawai'i's safety system by shifting away from traditional policing and incarceration, and instead promoting an intersectional, public health and wellness-centered approach to community safety.

We urge you to support the passage of HB1263.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick,
Executive Director



HB 1263, RELATING TO RELATING TO CORRECTIONS

FEBRUARY 5, 2025 · PSM HEARING

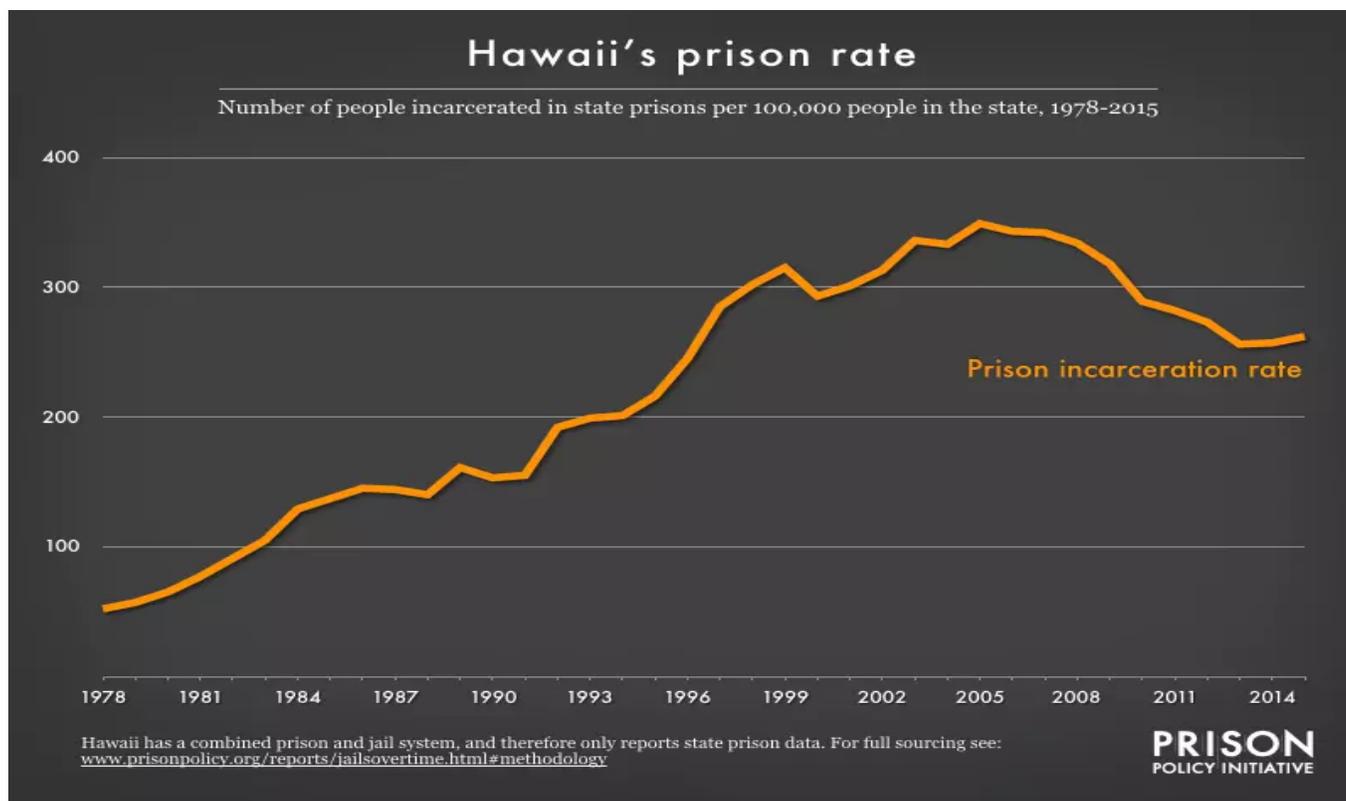
POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance supports HB 1263, relating to corrections, which establishes a moratorium on the issuance of a request for proposal and construction of any new or expanded correctional facility from 7/1/2025 to 6/30/2028, including the planned construction of a new facility to replace the existing Oahu community correctional center; and establishes a criminal justice diversion task force.

We need to build people, not prisons. Justice cannot be achieved through the creation of more jail cells. Hawai'i has approximately 5,100 inmates, hundreds of whom are incarcerated overseas, away from their families and homeland. The Prison Policy Initiative has found that our incarcerated population has grown dramatically since the 1970s and far surpasses that of the international community, with the islands incarcerating over 400 people per 100,000 residents, while nations like the United Kingdom, Canada, and France incarcerate roughly one-quarter of that amount.

According to a report by the American Civil Liberties Union released in recent years, pretrial detainees in Honolulu wait an average of 71 days for trial because they cannot afford bail. Additionally, researchers found that circuit courts in Hawai'i set monetary bail as a condition of release in 88 percent of cases, though only 44 percent of those people managed to post the amount of bail set by the court. Moreover, the study found the average bail amount for a Class C

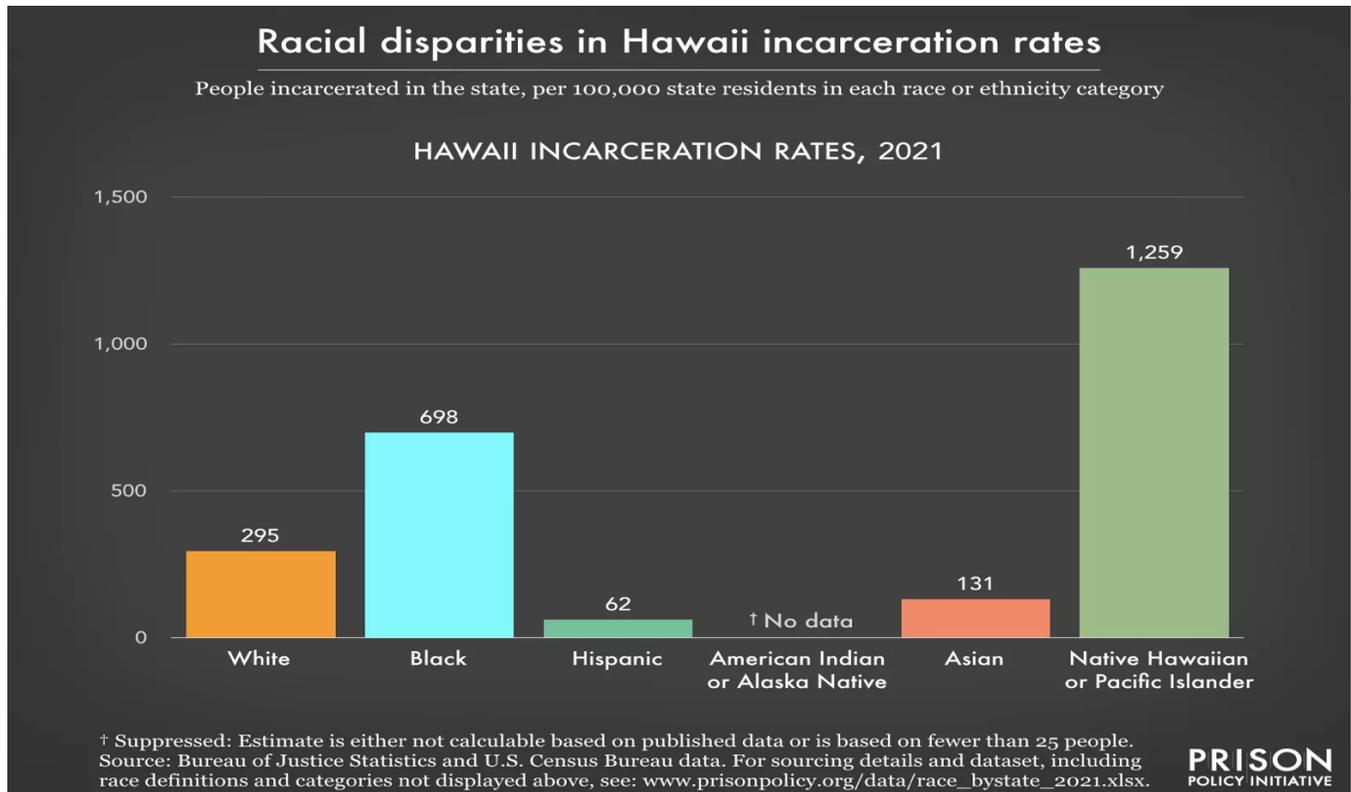
felony on O’ahu is set at \$20,000. Even with help from a bail bonding agency, posting bond in such cases would require an out-of-pocket expense of roughly \$2,000.



While wealthy defendants can afford to pay for bail, impoverished defendants often cannot afford to pay even minimal amounts, leaving economically disadvantaged people languishing in our jail system for low-level offenses. **These irrational “public safety” policies are the reason our jails are overcrowded.** Though officials claim that bail amounts are supposed to be based on a consideration of multiple factors—including flight risk, ability to pay, and danger to the community—researchers learned that in 91 percent of cases in Hawai’i, monetary bail mirrored the amount set by police in arrest warrants, an amount based solely on the crime charged. These injustices led the ACLU to declare that our state’s pretrial detention system is unconstitutional.

Furthermore, people of Native Hawaiian ancestry, who comprise approximately 25 percent of the state’s population, continue to suffer the pangs of a biased penal system. Approximately 39 percent of incarcerated detainees are Hawaiian, according to a comprehensive study by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, with the proportionality gap being even greater for Hawaiian women, who

comprise 19.8 percent of the state's female population, but 44 percent of the state's female inmate population. Researchers also found that, on average, Hawaiians receive longer sentences, more parole revocations, and harsher drug-related punishments than other ethnic groups.



Accordingly, **we believe our state should invest in policies to reduce our high incarceration rate, including restorative justice and diversion initiatives, pretrial bail reform, mental health programs, cannabis legalization, and more.** Legal detainment also correlates most heavily with socioeconomic status, with poverty being the biggest driver of “crime” in our community as under-resourced areas lack the social infrastructure, public health programs, and economic opportunities that empower people to flourish. Instead of constructing more cages to detain our state’s residents, we should pass policies that deliver economic fairness to financially vulnerable families, which will break the cycle of intergenerational poverty that too often serves as the social determinant of incarceration.

Contact us at imuaalliance.org/contact.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:34:07 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melinda Healani Sonoda-Pale	Ka Lahui Hawai'i	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 1263

Submitted by: Ka Lāhui Hawai'i

Healani Sonoda-Pale, Spokesperson

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice-Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

Ka Lāhui Hawai'i, a Kanaka Maoli initiative dedicated to self-determination and the protection of the rights of our people, strongly supports HB 1263, which establishes a moratorium on the construction of new correctional facilities through public-private partnerships and creates a Criminal Justice Diversion Task Force. This bill is not only a step toward justice reform but a fiscally responsible decision that prioritizes investments that will yield long-term savings for the state of Hawai'i.

1. A Cost-Effective Approach to Criminal Justice

Research has consistently shown that investing in early education, social services, and rehabilitation programs is far more cost-effective than continuing to expand our prison system. Studies indicate that for every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood programs, there is a return of approximately \$4 to \$9 in societal benefits, primarily due to reductions in crime and associated incarceration costs (impact.upenn.edu). The Chicago Longitudinal Study found that investments in preschool programs resulted in approximately \$11 in benefits for every \$1 spent, with most of these savings stemming from reduced crime rates (vox.com).

Rather than spending hundreds of millions of dollars on building new jails that will inevitably fill up, Hawai'i should be making evidence-based investments that prevent incarceration in the first place. Expanding early education, diversion programs, and social services not only improves lives but also saves taxpayers money in the long run.

2. The Criminalization of Kanaka Maoli Must End

Kanaka Maoli continue to be disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system in Hawai'i. The vast majority of those imprisoned at the O'ahu Community Correctional Center

(OCCC) are pretrial detainees, many of whom remain incarcerated solely because they cannot afford bail. This system perpetuates systemic inequities and criminalizes poverty.

A cost-effective criminal justice system should focus on reducing pretrial detention for nonviolent offenders and shifting resources toward programs that prevent crime before it happens. HB 1263 rightfully calls for a necessary pause in new jail construction so that a comprehensive review of Hawai‘i’s correctional policies can take place.

3. Public-Private Partnerships Are a Costly and Ineffective Approach

HB 1263 appropriately rejects the use of public-private partnerships (PPPs) for the development of new correctional facilities. The profit-driven nature of private prison corporations prioritizes cost-cutting over rehabilitation, resulting in inhumane conditions, lack of transparency, and higher recidivism rates. Correctional policies should serve the people of Hawai‘i, not corporate interests. Expanding private involvement in corrections does not address the root causes of incarceration, nor does it provide taxpayers with a sustainable or cost-effective solution.

4. Addressing Root Causes: Houselessness, Mental Health, and Substance Use

Research from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation shows that a significant percentage of incarcerated individuals in Hawai‘i were houseless before their incarceration and face homelessness upon release. Additionally, 86% of the incarcerated population requires substance abuse treatment.

Instead of building more jails, Hawai‘i must invest in programs that address the root causes of incarceration, including houselessness, mental illness, and substance use disorder. These efforts are not just morally sound but fiscally responsible, as evidence shows that early intervention, supportive housing, and community-based rehabilitation significantly reduce long-term criminal justice costs. HB 1263 is a step in the right direction by establishing a Criminal Justice Diversion Task Force to develop meaningful solutions.

5. The True Cost of a New Jail Must Be Considered

The Hawai‘i Correctional System Oversight Commission has emphasized the need for a system-wide evaluation before any new correctional facility is constructed. HB 1263 requires a thorough review of both the financial and social costs of the proposed new jail in Halawa and the potential renovation of the existing OCCC site. It is fiscally irresponsible to commit public funds to a major jail construction project without first exploring cost-effective alternatives that align with modern criminal justice best practices.

Conclusion

Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i urges the legislature to pass HB 1263 to halt the construction of unnecessary jails, protect Kanaka Maoli and other impacted communities from further systemic harm, and prioritize fiscally responsible policies that yield long-term economic benefits.

Investing in our people, rather than prisons, is the best path forward.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**Me ka 'oia'i'o,
Healani Sonoda-Pale
Spokesperson, Ka Lāhui Hawai'i**

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:10:35 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, I am Co-Chair for Green Party of Hawai'i. We are writing in STRONG support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. the Green Party of Hawai'i is well aware that many of those who are incarcerated are houseless and in need of emotional and mental support. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai'i's history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing. Having worked in a rehab facility it is rewarding to see people turn their lives around and become a contributing member of their community. We all need a purpose, and we need support.

Green Party of Hawai'i ask for your humble support for HB1263. Mahalo Nui !

Susan RobertsEmery
Co-Chair GPH
Green Party of Hawai'i
Paauilo

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:36:16 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning.

We shouldn't be spending \$1 billion on a new jail. More or bigger jails are not the solution to our problems. We need to be funding more supports for those that are troubled and needing help. More mental health support, more drug rehabilitation supports, and more supports for those who have gotten clean or gotten their mental health under control.

As it currently stands, if we keep arresting, locking up, then releasing folks who have mental health or drug issues, once we release them back on the streets, they are always at risk for going back to prison. The solution must be to rehabilitate these folks so that they do not struggle and have challenges that lead the back to prison. This is where we need to be investing our money, not in building bigger or more jails.

Thus, I stand in support of a moratorium on building new correctional facilities.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 12:17:37 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Deutzman	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

The legislature's first obligation is to assure public safety. This bill which pauses plans for an urgently jail defies logic.

Facts:

(1) Almost everyone agrees we need a new modern and compassionate jail to replace OCCC.

(2) Hawaii already has a very compassionate judicial system which assures that only the worst of the worst are incarcerated. There is a false narrative that people are being held unjustly and an implication that the accused are being “framed” by the system.

(3) There is a certain fixed percentage of the population that is incorrigible “unfixable”. Research tends to indicate that the percentage is approximately 1% of the population. Regardless of what the percentage is, math dictates the percentage of people who cannot be rehabilitated increases as the population of a community increases. Oahu’s population has nearly doubled since the last major renovation of OCCC.

(4) The oversight committee and other criminal advocates keep implying Hawaii has found some magical formula for rehabilitation but the sad fact that there is not any proven method yet to effectively intervene in changing anti-social criminal behavior. If there was something that works, everyone would be using it. I challenge you to ask the criminal justice advocates to show proof of performance in the methods they suggest that would warrant stopping the jail project.

(5) The harsh reality is that jail is 100% effective in keeping incorrigible and dangerous criminals out of the community for the length of their sentence. Our new jail should be compassionate and meet many of the design needs recommended by the oversight committee but to pause this project for experimental programs with no proven track record would be irresponsible.

John Deutzman

Waikiki

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 12:28:50 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerestin Walker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of the proposal to establish a moratorium on the construction of new or expanded correctional facilities from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2028, and the creation of a Criminal Justice Diversion Task Force. As someone who advocates for the abolition of prisons and the dismantling of punitive systems, I see this as an essential step toward a more humane and just society.

The logic of continuing to build and expand prisons is an approach that has only led to mass incarceration, the criminalization of poverty, and the disproportionate imprisonment of historically undervalued and underserved communities, primarily Native Hawaiian and BIPOC community members and this logic has been thoroughly discredited. Rather than addressing the root causes of harm, these institutions perpetuate cycles of violence, dehumanization, and trauma. More prisons do not make us safer. In fact, they exacerbate the very conditions that lead to crime, such as poverty, mental illness, and addiction. The notion that we can build our way out of these problems by expanding the carceral state is misguided and harmful.

By supporting this moratorium, you are recognizing that our society's focus should shift away from punitive measures and toward addressing the systemic issues that cause harm in the first place. This moratorium offers us the opportunity to rethink the role of prisons in our society and to explore transformative justice alternatives that prioritize healing, accountability, and rehabilitation, rather than punishment.

The creation of a Criminal Justice Diversion Task Force is a crucial step in this direction. We need comprehensive, community-led solutions that move away from punitive responses to harm. This task force should focus on creating programs that divert individuals away from the criminal justice system entirely through programs that address the root causes of criminalized behavior such as lack of resources, lack of community care, trauma, substance use, mental health and wellness, housing instability, and economic inequality. These programs must be grounded in restorative justice principles as well as cultural values and work to reintegrate individuals into society in a way that is healing, not retributive.

Furthermore, it is imperative that we prioritize the reallocation of resources away from building more prisons and toward community-based, cultural services that can prevent harm, address systemic inequities, and offer meaningful support to those in need. The funds that would have been spent on a new Oahu Community Correctional Center should be invested in housing, food for all, mental health and wellness, education, cultural services and job programs and things that actually contribute to public safety and well-being.

This moratorium is not just a pause on the expansion of prisons it is an opportunity to begin dismantling the carceral system itself. It is a chance to invest in the futures of those who are impacted by the justice system, to shift our priorities from punishment to care, and to start building a society based on justice, equity, and collective healing.

I strongly urge you to support this proposal as a step toward ending the prison industrial complex and creating a future where safety and justice are not dependent on cages, but on the dignity and well-being of all people.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Keke Walker

Community Organizer and Mental Health Advocate

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:40:23 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Janik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Richard Janik, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

Richard Janik, Lihue, HI

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:51:35 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dennis O'Shea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure.

We don't need more jails and prisons, unless you are ready to prosecute, convict, and imprison all the criminals who are currently running this state, which I doubt.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:54:10 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is kimdonghyeon, and I am writing in STRONG support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai'i's history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!
kimdonghyeon

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:59:12 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing. Mahalo.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 5:09:20 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsey Fritz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing to Support a Pause on the New \$1 Billion Super Jail.

I would also like to include that regardless of any funding measures or new jail planning, I do not support private jails/prisons in Hawaii. Jail is not the place for private business to make a profit.

Thank you

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 5:18:15 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexandra Perez Urbina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alexandra Perez Urbina, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. Hawai'ians cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai'i's history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing. Hawai'ians need options, not prisons. Prisons do not work. Without supportive/restorative programs to help people get out of the mental and physical place they are in, they will end up back inside the jail.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!
Alexandra Perez Urbina, Portland, OR

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 5:35:29 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

What are our priorities given what is happening at the national level and funding for education, housing, health and environmental protections? More jails & greater incarceration does not make us safer but the opposite. Protect and fund community

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:34:48 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Eliel, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration! Eliel,Kapaa

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:56:54 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melinda Yamaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 1263 ESTABLISHING A MORATORIUM ON EXPENDING FUNDS FOR A NEW CORRECTIONAL FACILITY AND FUNDING A CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVERSION TASK FORCE

Chair Belatti and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of HB 1263. For anyone that has spent meaningful time interacting with individuals caught up in Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system, as I do for work, it is abundantly clear that we can not incarcerate our way out of our problems. Jails, especially given Hawai‘i’s archaic bail system, become a temporary warehouse for the vulnerable members of our community – the houseless, the poor, and those without a safety net. Such a system does nothing to address the underlying issues, increases instability, and instead increases the likelihood that many individuals will continue to struggle. This cycle plagues our community and finding a solution is imperative. Investing solely in a larger jail is without a doubt not the right use of our limited resources. Instead, we need to invest in solutions that address the root problems and have potential to improve lives for those vulnerable individuals. There are numerous models and research which show how investing in diversion, rehabilitation, and community reintegration is sensible and more successful than a reactive, carceral approach. The pause that is provided for in HB 1263 will allow the time to develop a cost-effective, appropriate plan which implements a multifaceted approach to this complex problem. Notably, this pause does not suggest that there is no place in our community to incapacitate certain individuals through incarceration, it simply allows the time to address this issue in a way that can truly benefit our community.

Sincerely,

Melinda Yamaga

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:04:37 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1263 RELATING TO CORRECTIONS.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:28:01 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jennifer Lum, and I am writing in STRONG support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state-funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice-involved individuals, group homes, and clean and sober housing.

Prevention, support, and restorative justice are much more successful and reduce recidivism. We are Hawai‘i. We are better than forming and expanding the police state.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!
Jennifer Lum, ‘Ewa Beach

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:33:38 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colleen Rost-Banik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the House of Representatives Public Safety Committee,

My name is Colleen Rost-Banik and I am a resident of Waikiki and a Sociology Instructor at University of Hawaii, Manoa. I also teach a Creative Writing class at the Women's Community Correctional Center. I strongly support HB 1263 and ask that you do so too.

HB 1263 calls for a pause on any further planning and construction of the \$1 billion 1300 bed super jail being proposed by DCR - the most expensive state funded project in Hawaii's history. This project continues with the same failed approach to public safety. Over the past 8 years of teaching at WCCC, I have come to know many people who have been in and out of OCCC. Their success rate of being able to say out of jail does NOT hinge on a larger, more expensive building. Instead, what they need are more community supports, including diversion strategies.

The incarcerated students in my classes tell me time and time again that there are a couple of reasons why succeeding on the outside is so difficult: 1) housing is difficult to obtain when they can be discriminated against because of their criminal history and 2) the cost of living is too high, leading them make money quickly, and often illegally. This tells me that it is not a new, larger, more expensive jail that we need. Rather, we need to use that \$1 billion dollars to create more low-rent housing and quality mental health and substance abuse programs.

The following facts underline why HB 1263 should be passed:

- Currently, at least 40% of all people in jail in Hawai'i are houseless, and many more are suffering from mental health issues and addiction. 60 percent are pretrial and in jail simply because they cannot afford bail. Simply put, most people sitting in jail right now shouldn't be there.
- Jails have become place where we warehouse our most vulnerable residents and top DCR officials have openly acknowledged this approach is the least effective-most expensive option.
- The problems on our streets are primarily driven by both a housing and public health crisis, especially mental illness and substance addiction.
- Research has shown, if a bigger jail is built judges will fill the beds. There is no pressure to divert.

- Over the past few years, a robust diversion mandate has gained substantial support across the state. Vulnerable residents will be diverted out of jail and into treatment and housing, which will significantly decrease the jail population.
- We need to hit pause on this wrongheaded proposal, and pivot toward developing an appropriate solution that reflects the current mandate to divert and significantly reduce the jail population.
- Key justice system actors across the state, from police to judges to prosecutors have been meeting and agree that Hawaii has a robust diversion mandate, but that it is failing due to severe underfunding of necessary diversion infrastructure. From severe staffing shortages to severe shortage of places to divert people. The question, “Divert to where”?
- We need significant investment in places to divert people such as 24/7 supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes, clean and sober housing.
- However, the State has limited funds, and cannot afford both a \$1 billion jail and to adequately fund diversion infrastructure.
- There are far less costly solutions that can still effectively address the issues at OCCC. Fulton County recently abandoned plans for a similar \$1.7 billion super jail, and will instead renovate the existing facility for a cost of \$250 million. We can do this as well.

Please be courageous and vote to pass HB 1263, placing a pause on plans for the planning and construction of a \$1 billion jail.

Mahalo for your time,
Colleen Rost-Banik, Ph.D.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:47:21 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
fred hofer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Fred Hofer, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai'i's history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober houses

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

Fred Hofer

Hilo

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:04:05 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cameron Rasmussen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of HB1263. My name is Cameron Rasmussen. I am an Assistant Professor at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College in the Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health. My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai'i.

I strongly support this bill and believe the state should pause any further planning and construction of the \$1 billion super jail being proposed by DCR. This would be the most expensive state funded project in Hawaii's history, and continue an approach to public safety that has time and again shown it is ineffective in actually providing care and safety for the people of Hawai'i.

Building this jail does not need to be inevitable. Investments in diversion, housing, treatment, and health and mental healthcare will go much farther in creating safe and whole communities. We need real solutions to public safety that are rooted in meeting the needs of our most vulnerable community members. This super jail will do the opposite and instead further punish those at the margins while doing little to make our communities safe.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:43:32 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Maxera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We should be focused on how to support our community members instead of locking them in cages. I support a moratorium on any new jail planning because if our government builds or expands any facilities here they will always find ways to fill them so that they do not lose money on their investment. We need to break that cycle and invest in things that have been proven to actually improve lives, including expanding access to healthcare, housing, sustainable jobs, and education for our people. Put people over profit and stop spending money on prisons.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2025

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair
Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Rep. Mark J. Hashem	Rep. Mahina Poepoe
Rep. Linda Ichiyama	Rep. Justin H. Woodson
Rep. Rachele F. Lamosao	Rep. Garner M. Shimizu
Rep. Dee Morikawa	Rep. Kanani Souza

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Wednesday, February 5, 2025
TIME: 8:30 AM
PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 411

State Capitol

[415 South Beretania Street](#)

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to ask for your support regarding HB1263, requesting a Moratorium on new Oahu jail that is being planned, that has been scheduled for hearing on **Wednesday 2/5/25 at 8:30am.** I strongly support The Reimagining Public Safety in Hawai'i Coalition. They also support HB 1263. We believe the State should pause any further planning and construction of

the \$1 billion dollar, 1300 bed super jail being proposed by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR). These funds could be better spent by providing alternatives to incarceration, deferment and deflection from jail/prison, and programs and services for mental health and those in need of help versus being jailed as punishment. To continue punitive punishment for all offenses defeats the new era of compassionate rehabilitation and provision of support and healing to deal with systemic causes of crime to reduce mass incarceration and recidivism.

Public safety is of course paramount, however, achieving this safety also means caring for all the people within the community, offenders included. Ninety-five percent of those incarcerated will eventually be released from jail/prison, and will rejoin their communities and be a part of the public that will be afforded the promise of safety and security as well. Rehabilitation while incarcerated needs to be part of the program from the time of entry. Many times, due to the jails predominantly housing those people that are pre-sentenced and not yet convicted, those that have not been able to post bail, or those not offered a bond, sit awaiting their pleading and trial. Overcrowding of jails and prisons has led to the belief that bigger. Larger jails is not the answer. We need to offer alternatives to incarceration, alternative courts, bail options, deferment and assessments for each person to ensure that mental health issues are properly treated and those with serious mental health problems are provided treatment in facilities other than jails/prisons.

Voting for a pause does not mean that no planning or further action will take place. It means a pause on the current misguided DCR proposal, and pivoting toward developing a more fiscally responsible and appropriate solution that reflects the current mandate to divert and significantly reduce the jail population. The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission recently voted to support a pause, and sent the Governor a letter outlining similar reasons.

Having been incarcerated in the Oahu Community Correctional Center, I can personally attest to the horrid conditions and the lack of safety, humane treatment and compassion. I am a nurse by profession and witnessed many individuals suffer more than they should have due to lack of proper care, medication and being put in solitary confinement. The focus on punitive rather than restorative was evident every day. Programs were seriously lacking, education was non-existent and activities were extremely limited. Instead of spending millions of dollars on a new building, what is needed is maintenance and a focus on the imprisoned person and what can be done to best assist them in their recovery so that they improve themselves and recidivism is not an option after they are released. Support, therapy, social work, education and positive engagement is going to be more helpful than the harmful, negative, awful conditions that really exist within the walls of each module.

Facts from the Coalition note:

- Currently, at least 40% of all people in jail in Hawai'i are houseless, and many more are suffering from mental health issues and addiction. 60 percent are pretrial and in jail simply because they cannot afford bail.

- Simply put, most people sitting in jail right now shouldn't be there.
- Jails have become place where we warehouse our most vulnerable residents and top DCR officials have openly acknowledged this approach is the least effective-most expensive option.
- The problems on our streets are primarily driven by both a housing and public health crisis, especially mental illness and substance addiction.
- The Governor recently acknowledged that we cannot arrest and jail our way out of these problems.
- Research has shown, if a bigger jail is built judges will fill the beds. There is no pressure to divert.
- Over the past few years, a robust diversion mandate has gained substantial support across the state. Vulnerable residents will be diverted out of jail and into treatment and housing, which will significantly decrease the jail population.
- Decarceration through diversion and pre-trial reform eliminates need for new and bigger jail.
- The current DCR proposal for a \$1 billion superjail completely ignores this fact.
- We need to hit pause on this wrongheaded proposal, and pivot toward developing an appropriate solution that reflects the current mandate to divert and significantly reduce the jail population.
- Key justice system actors across the state, from police to judges to prosecutors have been meeting and agree that Hawaii has a robust diversion mandate, but that it is failing due to severe underfunding of necessary diversion infrastructure. From severe staffing shortages to severe shortage of places to divert people. The question, "Divert to where"?
- We need significant investment in places to divert people such as 24/7 supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes, clean and sober housing.
- However, the State has limited funds, and cannot afford both a \$1 billion jail and to adequately fund diversion infrastructure.
- There are far less costly solutions that can still effectively address the issues at OCCC. Fulton County recently abandoned plans for a similar \$1.7 billion super jail and will instead renovate the existing facility for a cost of \$250 million.

I ask for your serious consideration to approve this bill and pause any further spending on the Superjail. I would also ask that other measures that come before this committee regarding Solitary confinement, bail reform and funding for reentry programs be supported. I am dedicated to working towards a resolution for better programs and services for justice-involved individuals. We are all deserving of respect, dignity and second chances. Let's not waste time, money and energy on the wrong things. We need to put people first. The funds can be better utilized by investing in the people and programs.

Very respectfully,

Toni A. Floerke

Toni Floerke, BA, LPN, Certified Paraoptometric (CPO), Certified Peer Specialist (CPS), MSW Candidate – Univ of Michigan(Graduation: Dec 2026)

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:07:41 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kencho Gurung	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kencho, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!
Kencho Gurung, Hilo

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:09:59 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
flora wang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of HB1263. We should be focusing on rehabilitation instead of spending \$1 billion on a new jail without consideration of other options.

Mahalo,

Flora, Kaka'ako

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:13:17 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jonathan, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

Jonathan Simonds, Hilo

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:23:49 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelyn Reyno Yeomans	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Please accept my testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB1263.

It is time for the State and it's Director of the Department Of Corrections and Rehabilitation to focus on the conditions existing within the **CURRENT** jails and prisons within our state.

As we all know, conditions are not good and the effects are negative both for the people of Hawaii who are incarcerated and for the people that work there.

I have watched previous Directors make the rounds of Neighborhood Board Meetings and the State Capitol touting the need for a new jail. So many dollars spent and resources expended over many years, pushing and lobbying for a large new jail that will supposedly be the solution to everything.

In the meantime, conditions worsen or stay stagnant.

Please pass HB1263 so that the full attention of the Director and our State's leadership can be placed on improving conditions in our jails and prisons right **NOW**.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:28:12 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Marie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:31:03 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kodie Solis-Kalani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nui.

My name is Kodie Solis-Kalani and I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1263. Time and time again we have seen jails full of people whose only crime may have been to be houseless, or others who committed only a minor crime - some involving marijuana charges which is now legal in many states, and/or those who have received unfair sentences. I grew up around the jail system, visiting my dad every single weekend. At a young age, I learned the ins and outs of the prison system and how most times, sentences never changed much. Our recitivism rates are still high and a super jail such as this one proposed would just be another place to fill beds. A better way would be to invest in community resources such as supportive housing, health care, treatment programs, youth programs, jobs, etc. Mahalo.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:36:49 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isis Usborne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e,

I atrongly support this bill as a member of the Reimagining Public Safety Coalition.

The Reimagining Public Safety in Hawai'i Coalition strongly supports HB 1263. The state should pause any further planning and construction of the \$1 billion 1300 bed super jail being proposed by DCR. It would be the most expensive state funded project in Hawaii's history, and continue the same failed approach to public safety.

Voting for a pause does not mean that no planning or further action will take place. It means a pause on the current misguided DCR proposal, and pivoting toward developing a more fiscally responsible and appropriate solution that reflects the current mandate to divert and significantly reduce the jail population. The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission recently voted to support a pause, and sent the Governor a letter outlining similar reasons.

The following facts underline why HB 1263 should be passed:

- Currently, at least 40% of all people in jail in Hawai'i are houseless, and many more are suffering from mental health issues and addiction. 60 percent are pretrial and in jail simply because they cannot afford bail.
- Simply put, most people sitting in jail right now shouldn't be there.
- Jails have become place where we warehouse our most vulnerable residents and top DCR officials have openly acknowledged this approach is the least effective-most expensive option.
- The problems on our streets are primarily driven by both a housing and public health crisis, especially mental illness and substance addiction.
- The Governor recently acknowledged that we cannot arrest and jail our way out of these problems.
- Research has shown, if a bigger jail is built judges will fill the beds. There is no pressure to divert.
- Over the past few years, a robust diversion mandate has gained substantial support across the state. Vulnerable residents will be diverted out of jail and into treatment and housing, which will significantly decrease the jail population.
- Decarceration through diversion and pre trial reform eliminates need for new and bigger jail.

- The current DCR proposal for a \$1 billion superjail completely ignores this fact.
- We need to hit pause on this wrongheaded proposal, and pivot toward developing an appropriate solution that reflects the current mandate to divert and significantly reduce the jail population.
- Key justice system actors across the state, from police to judges to prosecutors have been meeting and agree that Hawaii has a robust diversion mandate, but that it is failing due to severe underfunding of necessary diversion infrastructure. From severe staffing shortages to severe shortage of places to divert people. The question, “Divert to where”?
- We need significant investment in places to divert people such as 24/7 supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes, clean and sober housing.
- However, the State has limited funds, and cannot afford both a \$1 billion jail and to adequately fund diversion infrastructure.
- There are far less costly solutions that can still effectively address the issues at OCCC. Fulton County recently abandoned plans for a similar \$1.7 billion super jail, and will instead renovate the existing facility for a cost of \$250 million.

Mahalo,

Isis Osborne
96815

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:37:12 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jingwoan Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jingwoan Chang, and I am in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. Instead of investing in a \$1 billion new jail, as one of the most expensive state-funded projects in Hawai‘i’s history, I would like our taxpayer money to go towards effective, humane, and supportive solutions like housing for justice-involved individuals, group homes, and clean and sober housing. Please consider pausing plans for an expensive new incarceration facility in favor of holistic, systems-wide approaches to rehabilitative public safety.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

Jingwoan Chang, ‘Āina Haina

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:41:09 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaua Kama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1263 – Moratorium on New or Expanded Correctional Facilities & Creation of a Criminal Justice Diversion Task Force

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I write in strong support of HB1263, which establishes a much-needed moratorium on the issuance of requests for proposals and the construction of any new or expanded correctional facilities from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2028. This includes pausing the planned replacement of the O‘ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) and, critically, establishes a Criminal Justice Diversion Task Force to explore more effective, humane, and fiscally responsible alternatives to incarceration.

Hawai‘i’s correctional system is deeply flawed—not because our jails are too small, but because our approach to criminal justice has relied too heavily on incarceration rather than addressing the root causes of crime. Instead of committing hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to build a mega jail, we should be investing in rehabilitation, reentry programs, mental health care, and restorative justice initiatives—all of which have been proven to reduce recidivism and create safer communities.

The establishment of a Criminal Justice Diversion Task Force is a forward-thinking and necessary step. This task force will allow stakeholders, including impacted community members, to develop a comprehensive and just approach to public safety—one that prioritizes diversion, rehabilitation, and reintegration over incarceration. Expanding jail capacity does not address the root issues driving incarceration, such as poverty, houselessness, untreated mental health conditions, and substance use disorders.

Native Hawaiians and other marginalized communities continue to be disproportionately impacted by mass incarceration. A new jail does nothing to address these systemic injustices. Instead, HB1263 provides Hawai‘i with a real opportunity to shift away from outdated, punitive approaches and toward evidence-based solutions that keep our communities safe while ensuring justice and dignity for all.

I urge you to pass HB1263 and take a stand for a smarter, more just, and more effective criminal justice system in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Kaulilinoe Kama

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:58:05 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JarraeTehani Manasas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

JarraeTehani Manasas, Kailua Kona Hawai‘i

Paula T. Morelli, PhD
1511 Ehupua Place, Honolulu, HI 96821
morelli@hawaii.edu

February 3, 2025

Dear Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair and Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair, and Members: Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Rep. Rachele F. Lamosao, Rep. Garner M. Shimizu, Rep. Dee Morikawa and Rep. Kanani Souza,

My name is Paula T. Morelli, PhD, I am testifying in **support of HB1263 Moratorium on new jail planning**

Hawaii state intends to build a new jail in Halawa Valley to replace Oahu Community Correctional Center without a correctional system reform plan. **This means taxpayer dollars will be invested in facilities and systems which continue to perpetuate trauma, are ineffective and wasteful. Please stop any action toward building a new jail before system reform is carefully planned and activated.**

Correctional system reform will take time and concerted effort. It will need evidence-based, multifaceted approaches to transform a historically punishment-focused system into a culture which implements rehabilitation and wellbeing. There are many successful systems that have decreased recidivism, the devastating effects on families and communities, inhumane conditions, financial costs & negative outcomes. A larger jail will not solve the problem.

We can shift our current punitive model to approaches which prioritize healing, rehabilitation within culturally relevant contexts, and include communities as partners in the process. Equally important, we need to address: the overrepresentation of Native Hawaiians and marginalized populations; rehabilitation and reintegration; sentencing reform, accountability & oversight; inmate rights and restorative justice; and racial & social inequities.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula T. Morelli, PhD

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:19:10 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Shirriff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Victoria Shirriff, and I am writing in support of HB1263 to establish a moratorium on new jail planning. I believe the money allocated to the development of a new jail can be better invested in our community through justice-oriented programs that support individuals, group homes, and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263.

Mahalo,

Victoria, Honolulu

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:22:57 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Eaton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carolyn Eaton. I am a resident of Makiki, and I want to register strong support for the moratorium called for in this measure.

The further commitment of any money toward planning and construction of the new jail proposed by the Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation must be put on hold. This bill will do that, and also create a criminal justice diversion task force. I am persuaded the new jail when reimagined with systems of diversion in place will be a completely different-looking concept and a smaller structure than the very expensive one now proposed by the DCR.

The Legislature set the State Department of Corrections on the path of reform several years ago. The Department of Corrections is now the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and it has a vital new partner in the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission. Almost unbelievably, the DCR proposes continuing to spend money to plan the grandiose project which seemed to be needed before reforms began to occur.

The criminal justice diversion task force must be formed to demonstrate to legislators and the public that the new jail can have fewer beds than the one DCR continues to push.

Mahalo for your hard work. My own focus is on the individuals now incarcerated in the facility (OCCC) operated by the leadership and staff who are unfamiliar with, or unconvinced, that diversion and other reforms, already in place in other states, will work here too, to keep the jail population smaller and the focus on rehabilitation for those who need to be incarcerated. This moratorium is critically important.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:27:47 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- at least 40% of all people in jail in Hawai‘i are houseless, and many more are suffering from mental health issues and addiction. 60 percent are pretrial and in jail simply because they cannot afford bail.
- Research has shown, if a bigger jail is built judges will fill the beds. There is no pressure to divert.
- We need significant investment in places to divert people such as 24/7 supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes, clean and sober housing.
- However, the State has limited funds, and cannot afford both a \$1 billion jail and to adequately fund diversion infrastructure.

Sample Testimony:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Please consider that most people in jail are not serious threats, but are houseless, suffering from mental health issues and addiction, or simply because they cannot afford bail. It would be far better to spend that \$1 billion to solve the serious social problems that harm so many in Hawaii.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

David Leake, Kaneohe

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:39:15 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Shaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need a \$1billion to address issues that prevent the imprisonment of people. Like housing, quality education, access to food, mental and social health support.

Please no mega jails. Invest in free school meals for all our keiki or climate resilience work instead.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:40:41 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealakai Hammond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of HB1263. We cannot afford to invest in a billion dollar jail that will worsen over-incarceration. We must invest in our community in ways that will help lessen crime and support those at risk - more effective and supportive housing, group homes, clean and sober housing, and substance abuse and mental health treatment.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kealakai Hammond

Honolulu, HI

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:30:43 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelsie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Kelsie, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as of the most expensive state-funded projects in Hawaii's history. This project will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice-involved individuals, group homes, and clean and sober housing.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:31:56 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Keala Fung, and I am writing in STRONG support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as one of the most expensive state-funded projects in Hawai‘i’s history. This project will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice-involved individuals, group homes, and clean and sober housing.

We should invest in workforce development, cultural education, skills building, and mental health and support! Money should go to remedial care and even preventative care, and NOT incarcerating more people. Jail should be the last resort not a default solution.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

Keala Fung, Honolulu HI

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:54:24 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aree Worawongwasu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 1263, which establishes a moratorium on the construction of new or expanded correctional facilities and creates a Criminal Justice Diversion Task Force. This bill represents a critical step toward reimagining justice in Hawai‘i and addressing the root causes of incarceration.

The criminal legal system has relied on punitive measures that disproportionately harm working-class communities of color, particularly Kanaka Maoli and Micronesians. Building more prisons and expanding carceral facilities is not a solution to the challenges Hawai‘i faces. Instead of investing in cages, we must invest in people—in education, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, affordable housing, and community-based programs that address the underlying causes of crime.

HB 1263 provides an opportunity to pause and reflect on how Hawai‘i can do better. The proposed moratorium on new or expanded correctional facilities allows us to shift the focus from incarceration to prevention and rehabilitation. By establishing a Criminal Justice Diversion Task Force, this bill ensures that we take a thoughtful, evidence-based approach to reducing incarceration rates and creating pathways for people to reintegrate into society.

The appropriation of funds to support this effort is equally critical. These resources can be used to develop and expand diversion programs, restorative justice initiatives, and community-led solutions that have been proven to reduce recidivism and promote public safety. Every dollar spent on prevention and rehabilitation saves countless dollars that would otherwise be spent on incarceration.

As a community, we have the choice to choose a different path—one that prioritizes healing, accountability, and opportunity over punishment and exclusion. HB 1263 is a bold and necessary step in that direction. It aligns with the values of aloha and pono, working towards a justice system that reflects compassion and fairness.

I urge you to pass HB 1263 and support a future where communities are strengthened, not torn apart by incarceration. Let us seize this opportunity to create a more just and equitable Hawai‘i for generations to come.

Mahalo,

Aree Worawongwasu,

PhD Student, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 6:24:32 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Belatti, Vice Chair Representative Iwamoto and Members of the Committee on Public Safety.

Please support HB 1263 to establish a moratorium on new or expanded correctional facilities.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 6:30:18 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
K. H.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, resident of senate district 13 and representative district 28, support HB1263.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 6:33:46 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and PBS Committee,

As a taxpaying resident, I write in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB1623**, which calls for a moratorium on construction of a new jail.

This project is a costly burden on the taxpaying public, and it does nothing to address the root causes underlying incarceration in Hawai'i. In many ways, it is a very expensive bandaid that will cost the State money and prevent true justice over time.

Please pass this bill so our local resources can be dedicated to more worthwhile investments to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

Makiki, HI

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:01:19 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexis Muller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Commite members. I am writing testimony in strong support of HB1263. We do not need a billion dollar prison. We can sue that money for community programs that restore families back together in healthy ways.

That money could pay for summer camps for at risk youth, mental health services for the entire ohana, programs for healthy food and outdoor activities. Incarceration is not the answer.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:45:52 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
takiguchi@gmail.com	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michelle, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as one of the most expensive state-funded projects in Hawai'i's history. This project will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective rehabilitation and supportive housing for justice-involved individuals, group homes, and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

Michelle, Honolulu, Hawai'i

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:46:27 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cori	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A new jail should absolutely not be built here. There are so many things that money could go to that doesn't involving incarcerated even more people. Hawai'i can and should change the legacy of mass incarceration. Land and money should not be used in such haphazard ways. We should invest in the communities around us, not build more jails.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:52:56 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Young	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha, I strongly support HB 1263 which simply pauses any further planning and construction of the \$1 billion super jail being proposed by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. This would be the most expensive state-funded project in Hawaii’s history and would not even come close to solving our issues as incarceration is a failed approach to public safety.

A pause would allow the possibility to pivot toward other solutions that are fiscally responsible and better reflect the current mandate to divert and significantly reduce the jail population. We desperately need diversion infrastructure. People don’t need to be locked up. They need supportive housing, healthcare, treatment, food, community services and support. We can’t fund these things if we’re spending \$1 billion on a new facility and even more to keep people in there once it's built.

Please also remember that jails, in contrast to prisons, are short-term facilities to hold people before trial and sentencing. Currently at least 40% of all people in jail in Hawaii are houseless and many more are suffering from mental health issues and addiction. 60% are pretrial and stuck because they can’t afford bail — and the people of Hawaii end up paying to keep them locked up.

There are far less costly solutions that can still effectively address the issues at OCCC. Fulton County recently abandoned plans for a similar \$1.7 billion super jail, and will instead renovate the existing facility for a cost of \$250 million.

Investing in a new jail would be divesting in infrastructure and services that could truly support our community and I believe this would be a huge mistake. PLEASE support HB 1263 to pause plans for a new jail.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kristen Young
Honolulu 96813
Reimagining Public Safety in Hawai‘i Coalition
Faith Action Hawai‘i

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:58:13 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Summer Said	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:19:12 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Broderick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Emma Broderick, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

Emma Broderick, Leaha, Kalihi

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:58:43 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joell Edwards , and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!
Joell Edwards, Wainiha

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:25:57 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB 1263 which establishes a moratorium on the issuance of a request for proposal and construction of any new or expanded correctional facility from 7/1/2025 to 6/30/2028, including the planned construction of a new facility to replace the existing Oahu community correctional center. Establishes a criminal justice diversion task force. Appropriates funds.

There are so many issues that are important to our community including housing which I believe that if we spent time solving would abate the need for more correctional facilities. It is my understanding that many of the people currently housed in our facilities have mental or drug issues, they are not solved by incarcerating. We have to do better. This is Hawaii, we are unique and should have unique paths to solving our issues. Incarcerating and policing are not always the best answer.

C. Burghardt

Kou, Oahu

LATE

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:30:45 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann V Saffery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ann V Saffery and I am writing in STRONG support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Research has shown, if a bigger jail is built judges will fill the beds. There is no pressure to divert.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

Ann V Saffery

Pearl City, HI

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:59:21 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

LATE

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 10:38:32 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Noelle Lindenmann, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing. Restorative justice is important for all involved. Jails and prisons do not help that.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

LATE

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 11:10:17 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick Uchigakiuchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear House Committee Members:

It is imperative that we reform of our incarceration system which is woefully outdated and ineffective. An important improvement to our system is to establish community-based programs that will significantly reduce the jail population, particularly among people who are poor, homeless, mentally ill, and struggling with substance use disorders.

The State has already wasted millions planning a jail that will not meet the needs of our community, but it's not too late to change course. We call on the Hawaii State Legislature to pause any further planning and construction of the \$1 billion 1300 bed super jail being proposed by DCR. It would be the most expensive state funded project in Hawaii's history, and continue the same failed approach to public safety. Voting for a pause does not mean that no planning or further action will take place. It means a pause on the current misguided DCR proposal, and pivoting toward developing a more fiscally responsible and appropriate solution that reflects the current mandate to divert and significantly reduce the jail population. The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission recently voted to support a pause, and sent the Governor a letter outlining similar reasons. Below is a brief summary of why this pause is justified.

- Currently, at least 40% of all people in jail in Hawai'i are houseless, and many more are suffering from mental health issues and addiction. 60 percent are pretrial and in jail simply because they cannot afford bail.
- Simply put, most people sitting in jail right now shouldn't be there.
- Over the past few years, a robust diversion mandate has gained substantial support across the state. Vulnerable residents will be diverted out of jail and into treatment and housing, which will significantly decrease the jail population.
- Decarceration through diversion and pre trial reform eliminates need for new and bigger jail.
- There are far less costly solutions that can still effectively address the issues at OCCC.
- We need to hit pause on this wrongheaded proposal, and pivot toward developing an appropriate solution that reflects the current mandate to divert and significantly reduce the jail population.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Patrick Uchigakiuchi

LATE

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:56:06 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Travis Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1263 to pause and halt moving forward with allocating resources to new prison projects.

The answer to social, economic, and political complexities is never to build more prisons to put people in. That is not an effective, or humane solution. The funds, resources, and attention being put into this would be better served into countless programs that support people who are struggling, not turn them into criminals.

Thus, I am in support of HB1263, so that further harm can be halted before more people suffer.

LATE

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:04:45 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this measure.

LATE

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:18:23 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jennifer k	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose bill HB1263. We don't need another jail on the islands, let alone a \$1B jail. Most of the current jails occupants don't need to be there anyways. This is not needed on our islands!!

LATE

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:18:44 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Best	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai'i's history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

Mahalo for supporting this bill and allowing input.

Barbara Best, Wailuku

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 3:23:44 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Veronica Gibson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of the proposed bill to pause the construction of a 1 billion dollar jail for Hawai'i. I have experience with a loved one in these systems which has shown me what those who profit from private prisons would rather citizens did not see. The current private prison in Saguaro acts to keep prisoners waiting excessively long time periods for rehabilitation programs and trainings needed for their release. They also redact nearly all of their records of incidents within the prison from public view, including deaths and other questionable incidences. All of this is done at a huge expense to the Hawaii tax payer, driving profits for the private prison system. These systems are not designed to "correct". They, in coordination with private security firms which are often owned by the same companies and the lobbying these companies pay for, create systems which create career criminals and have high recidivism rates. All to profit private corporations which will drive millions of tax payer dollars out of Hawai'i. This is not what is right for our people nor our economy. We need our own people controlling our prisoners. We need money staying in state. Especially with the corruption occurring on the national level with Trump and driving private prison profits under the guise of immigration enforcement. This is a critical time to keep control of these systems in Hawaii and to fix the systems and systemic issues that create criminals!

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 4:44:05 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meredith Buck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Meredith Buck, and I am writing to express my strong support for HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. Hawai'i cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as it would be one of the most expensive state-funded projects in Hawai'i's history. This project will cost taxpayers -- during an already difficult era of trade wars and rising prices -- and would worsen existing issues of over-incarceration.

Knowing that a large percentage of those incarcerated are unhoused, we must instead invest in effective and supportive housing for justice-involved individuals, group homes, and clean and sober housing. Infrastructure is another great alternative place to allocate the funds that would have been spent on jailing our communities.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

Meredith

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 6:14:33 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christina Puakea Busby	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Christina Puakea Busby, and I am a Native Hawaiian woman and resident of Honolulu. I am submitting testimony in support of HB1263, which calls for a moratorium on the planning of the proposed superjail to replace OCCC. As an educator with over 13 years of experience serving diverse student populations in Hawaii and Washington, I have witnessed firsthand how investing in prisons and the prison industrial complex is harmful to all communities, but especially our most marginalized and vulnerable populations. Hawaii jails and prisons disproportionately incarcerate Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders as well as people with special needs/disabilities and homelessness. Investing one billion dollars into building a new jail does not represent the kind of future we should be building for the youth of Hawaii. I have seen far too many of my students, mostly young men of color, imprisoned. Many of them have been racially profiled by police. Others have committed serious crimes, a result of trauma, poverty, and an underfunded public education system. These were students who once had drive and motivation and loved their families, but a society that deems their racial and ethnic groups as inferior hardened their hearts, and a lack of community resources led them to believe they had no other choice but to commit crimes.

If Hawaii wants to get serious about building safe, healthy communities, then we must invest our public funds in community resources. When we invest in public education, affordable housing, affordable healthcare (especially mental health access), treatment facilities, jobs, youth programs, and community-building initiatives, crime decreases as the majority of crimes in our communities are rooted in histories of poverty and inequity. When we critically examine the demographics of prisoners in Hawaii, we observe patterns. The majority of offenders come from groups that have been historically marginalized and disenfranchised in America. Therefore, I support HB1263, which stops the building of a new jail. I do not support public taxpayer money funding the prison industrial complex, which further perpetuates harm, violence, and inequity, when that money could be better spent on funding education, mental health care, youth programs, and truly affordable housing which would greatly reduce and prevent crime and make our communities safer.

Investing in prisons is short sighted. We must ask ourselves if the prison industrial complex is truly the best answer that we as a society can come up with. If prisons aim to reduce crime, they do not work and accomplish nothing besides perpetuating cycles of trauma and

disenfranchisement. Prisons do not get to the root of the problems in society. We are struggling from a history of coloniality, which created systems rooted in inequality. We must be brave and tap into our collective creativity to develop different solutions to address the most pressing issues of our time.

What our society invests in represents what we value most. Do we really value the violence of incarceration over the justice and healing of education? We cannot accept this. We must do better. Therefore, please pass HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christina Busby

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:26:15 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
De Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

Please pause this project. We are spending multi-millions of taxpayer funds which won't help our people, but only continue the river of poverty to jail pipeline. We must invest in more effective programs for justice involved individuals, supportive group homes and addition-recovery programs.

It will be the most expensive state funded project in Hawai'i's history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration. Instead, we should fund job opportunities, education, healthcare, housing to raise up our community in terms of success and growth.

Please support HB1263.

Sincerely,

D. Austin

Kihei, Hi

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:32:24 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alfred Medeiros	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou, as a Kānaka Maoli and Hawaiian that loss 14yrs of his life within the system, building a new prison isn't the answer or a solution that's needed. Reform is something that's needed, as our prison system doesn't have the rehabilitation tools needed for anybody to become better citizens. That should be prioritized before building another prison that'll only cost taxpayers more money and you'll get the same results that you have now. I support HB1263 to put a pause on development and in hopes of bringing people to the table to bring better solutions that would work here in Hawai'i. For instance, as a farmer, I'd love to see inmates wether incarcerated, furloughed or on parole/probation on the 'Āina and connecting to the land that gives life, but also doing something that'll be beneficial to everybody, especially for the inmates. We could bring the change that's needed for those that need rehabilitation and also help our home of Hawai'i in a much needed way. Prisons don't help, they cost a lot to run and as we've seen throughout the years, corruption plagues internally. There's better options and would love to help in any way that I can to bring better options to the table. Mahalo for your time and taking my testimony.

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1263**, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as one of the most expensive state-funded projects in Hawai'i's history. This project will cost tax payers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice-involved individuals, group homes, and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Mahalo,

Kiana Otsuka, Moanalua resident

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:35:17 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emelia Briscoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Emelia, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai‘i’s history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

Emelia Briscoe, Honolulu

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 11:19:49 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Sarasa	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 5:11:46 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

People over prisons. Lets please address the true roots of crime and violence in our communities rather than building more prisons that are likely to be over capacity just like now if we don't address root issues. Please pass this bill. Mahalo.

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:13:31 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michele Nihipali, and I am writing in STRONG support of HB1263, which establishes a moratorium on new jail planning. We cannot afford to invest in a \$1 billion new jail, as the most expensive state funded project in Hawai'i's history, a project that will cost taxpayers dearly and worsen issues of over-incarceration.

Instead, we must invest in more effective and supportive housing for justice involved individuals, group homes and clean and sober housing.

Please support HB1263. Mahalo for your consideration!

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:31:41 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in strong support of HB1263 moratorium to build Oahu Correction facility. Many individuals imprisoned are homeless, have a mental health issue and turn to substance abuse with a large percent being Native Hawaiians. Hawaii has increase housing and also built a new addition to the Hawaii State Hospital since many are unable to face the issues of being colonized in our own island nation. Placing individuals that have a mental health issue into jails and prisons also hinders our justice system. Back in 2010, I tried to explain to adjunct professors who were Probation and Parole Officers at Chaminade, that many of those incarcerated didn't just need substance abuse treatment, they really needed mental health assistance. Many disagreed with me, since most knew that I was labeled with a mental illness diagnosis. But through later contact, many professors changed their thinking, especially after the pandemic, where isolation, depression, loneliness, and anxiety caused many individuals to increase the use of substances.

Receiving mental health treatment outside in their own communities were a better fix than sending them to prison to really learn to be a hardened criminal or somewhere on the continent away from the support of ohana. The prisons were Super Prisons and do not support those from Hawaii with any aloha spirit! Agreed it was to decrease the cost spent on housing prisoners but that didn't help those incarcerated to rehabilitate themselves. As many of us, realize just going outside of Honolulu or going to other islands greatly reduced the stress and anxiety faced on a day to day level. Many can't even cope with driving in traffic in and out of the city, as I have offered my services being born and raised in Kaimuki.

The support and seeing their loved ones, especially their children is the best healing you can receive. But we know that criminal activity starts at home and started with the actions of our own parents or guardians. Many children already have a mental blockage if they were put up for adoption or placed in the child welfare system to be taken care of by foster parents who didn't care but was getting paid to house the child, but did not help the mental issue that the child faced. So many blame their mother for abandoning them, something she needed to do at the time in hopes that the child will have a better life without her. Thus the basis of finding out how a child feels about their parents are essential in realizing the effects of trauma the child faced, although our degrees of the trauma is felt differently in each individual and culture even living in our islands.

Instead of incarcerating individuals or placing children in the welfare system, which damages them more, we need to place people in an environment where they feel loved and wanted, not because it is a financial transaction to benefit someone else. The Olmstead Act which was a

lawsuit from Georgia, placed individuals where they want to live and environment they are familiar with and a culture they can connect with in order to heal. Thus, even the Housing First Model from Pennsylvania placed homeless into a home first, the basic needs of a person, shelter, food, and clothing.

Our original Medical Model was treat them first and usually place them in insane asylums and prisons, which presently service more individuals with mental health and substance abuse issues because they couldn't seek the basic needs to survive. This was specially true from the late 1800s, if the wife was outspoken and went against the actions of her husband, who was seen as the head of the household and medical treatment was centered around the white male. When women wanted to vote in the Suffrage movement and traveled together to advocate in different states, they were condemned as being lesbians or gays, although men were doing the same acts with their friends and even team mates. But these women were told that the Black man needed to be able to vote first.

Thus the movement to release those in so called insane asylums or mental institutions in the late 1960-70s. Coincidentally, the same time as the Hippie movement and Flower Power, where people turned psychedelic drugs to cope, traveled to the Far East, such as Thailand, India, and Japan to learn customs that the Westerners did not support and spread their wisdom throughout the U.S. as alternative health or homeopathologists. But Hawaii was the mix of two sides, where East met West, although our directions was off, so it was better to use Mauka and Makai. Native Hawaiians had their awa root and marijuana plants, like many other Pacific Islanders with their own remedies to relieve the stress especially for the men in what we know is a matriarch society.

Do we need to submit our population to Pharmaceutical drugs, which were called LSD, heroin, opium and blamed on the Chinese population by western culture? Or methamphetamines and opiates, that are legal? Or the illegally manufactured substitutes rather than to take on plants, now called cannibus, which was originally found in the Bible as many proclaimed? Name changing doesn't change the results of what Western influence or colonization has done in our islands. Please support HB1263!

HB-1263

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:38:01 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/5/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lawrence Ford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support a moratorium on the new jail planning.

Lawrence Ford