



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 280, H.D. 3, RELATING TO THE COMMUNITY OUTREACH COURT.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

DATE: Tuesday, March 18, 2025

TIME: 9:45 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 016

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Mark S. Tom, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the following comments and recommended amendments.

The purpose of this bill is to permanently establish, and appropriate funds for, the Community Outreach Court, as a division of the District Court of the First Circuit.

The Community Outreach Court is a specialty court created through the collaboration of the Judiciary, Office of the Public Defender, and the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu. This court began as an independent and unfunded pilot project among the three agencies and later received legislative support through Act 55, Session Laws of Hawaii 2017 (Act 55). The unique aspect of this court is its streamlined process, involving limited stakeholders to effectively assist its target population.

The Department recognizes the positive impact this court has on the target population and supports the continued collaboration among the three agencies currently involved. Since late 2023, the Department has undertaken the prosecution of all state-initiated cases. Although the Department was not initially included in Act 55, it has worked closely with the existing stakeholders to ensure all state-initiated cases are considered for the Community Outreach Court.

Based on an agreement reached between the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu, Office of the Public Defender, and the

Department of the Attorney General, the Department recommends the following revisions to the bill:

1. In section 2 of the bill, on page 3, line 17, to page 4, line 6, in the definition of "prosecuting attorney" in section -1 of the new chapter, **delete paragraphs (3) and (4) to read as follows:**
"Prosecuting attorney" means:
 - (1) The prosecuting attorney for the city and county of Honolulu;
and
 - (2) Any deputy prosecuting attorney of the department of the prosecuting attorney of the city and county of Honolulu.
2. **Delete section 7 of the bill**, on page 10, line 19, through page 11, line 6, which makes appropriations to establish one full-time equivalent deputy attorney general tasked with duties for the community outreach court. The subsequent sections will need to be renumbered accordingly.

The Department notes that these amendments were adopted by the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs in its oral decision making on February 5, 2025 (2:30:13)¹. However, it appears these amendments were inadvertently omitted from House Draft 2 of the bill. The Department respectfully asks that the Committee address this oversight.

We believe the Department's current process in the District Court of the First Circuit remains the most effective and efficient method for addressing state-initiated cases involving individuals interested in the Community Outreach Court. Expanding the definition of "prosecuting attorney" to include the Attorney General and deputy attorneys general would unnecessarily complicate the existing processes.

In the alternative, if the Committee decides to proceed with including the Department of the Attorney General within the definition of "prosecuting attorney," we recommend deleting the following sections in the proposed new chapter: "**§ -1**

¹ House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs – Hearing held February 5, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. Available online on YouTube at the 2:30:13 mark, <https://www.youtube.com/live/D7hubwv8JiQ>. Last accessed February 21, 2025.

Definitions" (page 3, line 11, to page 4, line 11), "**§ -4 Principles and components of the court"** (page 5 line 10, to page 6, line 8), "**§ -5 Court process"** (page 6, line 9, to page 8, line 2), and adding a rule section similar to section 604A-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, for Environmental Court, to read as follows:

§ -3 Policies and procedures. The agencies involved shall jointly adopt policies and procedures regarding the administration, operation, and procedures of the Community Outreach Court.

All agencies involved with the Community Outreach Court have shown a willingness to continue working collaboratively to expand and strengthen this successful program. These amendments to the bill would allow for greater flexibility in adjusting policies and procedures as agreed upon by the current agencies involved and allow for participation by other agencies in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.



The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i

Testimony to the Thirty-Third Legislature, 2025 Regular Session

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 18, 2025 at 9:45 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

by

Thomas A. K. Haia

District Court, First Circuit

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 280, H.D. 3, Relating to the Community Outreach Court.

Purpose: Permanently establishes and appropriates funds for the Community Outreach Court as a division of the District Court of the First Circuit. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD3)

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary offers its unconditional support for and urges the passage of House Bill No. 280, H.D. 3, Relating to the Community Outreach Court. Community Outreach Court has been in existence as a Judiciary project since the passing of Act 55, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2017. Since then, Community Outreach Court – referred to by many participants and former participants as COC – has helped hundreds of unsheltered and sheltered individuals and, ultimately, their respective families.

With the passage of House Bill No. 280, H.D. 3, COC will become a permanent court, as opposed to a continued project. The legislature’s approval of House Bill No. 280, H.D. 3 is essential for this to happen. The Judiciary strongly supports the passage of this measure and hopes COC will become a permanent court on July 1, 2025.

Since its inception under the late Judge Darolyn Lendio, COC has helped more than 600 participants, cleared nearly 11,000 cases, lifted more than 7,000 license stoppers, and recalled more than 900 bench warrants. These numbers show how COC helps all residents on O‘ahu.



Here are two specific examples of how COC has had a positive impact on community members' lives.

One of our graduates shared how as a single father of one, who was involved with Child Welfare Services (CWS), he and his son had to ride TheBus for two hours one-way in order to get his son from Makaha to preschool in 'Ewa Beach, then ride another hour to get to work, repeating the process – in reverse - in the afternoon. He further shared the need for him to meet with his CWS social worker and service providers to complete his Family Service Plan, all done by transporting himself and his son on TheBus. After graduating from COC, he shared how he was able to obtain his Hawai'i driver's license and – now – is able to commute through use of his own vehicle.

Another COC graduate, also a single father of two children, shared how he was homeless living in his car with his children, one of whom is diagnosed autistic. Every morning, he drove his children to school and would, oftentimes, be stopped and cited for driving with no license. Following his graduation from COC, he was able to obtain his driver's license and became gainfully employed as an aide at his children's school.

When COC participants are able and willing to share their stories, it becomes abundantly clear how important COC is to our community. Moving this legislation forward to make COC a permanent court is essential to its continued success.

The Judiciary continues to hold regularly scheduled meetings with our partners in COC; the Office of the Public Defender; and the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, City and County of Honolulu. All three organizations recognize the importance of COC and its positive impact for our community members. In meetings with our stakeholders, the Judiciary understands the Office of the Public Defender plans to withdraw its previous request to amend the language of the Senate's version of this bill (SB361, SD2), which it submitted during a hearing held by the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs on March 11, 2025. The stakeholders will continue to work cooperatively in order to provide our participants with the most appropriate available services and sentences to meet their needs.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony supporting House Bill No. 280, H.D. 3.

JON N. IKENAGA
PUBLIC DEFENDER

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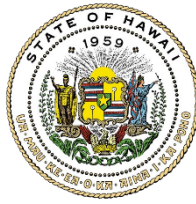
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FAMILY COURT DIVISION
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STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

March 17, 2025

HAYLEY Y. C. CHENG
ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER

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H.B. No. 280, HD3: RELATING TO COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender **supports HB 208, HD3**. This measure would permanently establish and appropriate moneys for the Community Outreach Court (“COC”) as a division of the District Court of the First Circuit.

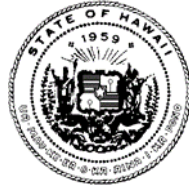
Since 2017, the Office of the Public Defender (“OPD”), the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney and the Judiciary have worked in concert to assist nonviolent offenders resolve pending and adjudicated offenses through alternative sentencing, including community service. COC has been instrumental in recalling and reducing the amount of outstanding and stagnant bench warrants and resolving thousands of pending cases with positive outcomes for both the offender and the community. The burden on law enforcement has been reduced through recalled bench warrants and penal summons that previously languished unserved. Participants who were previously unable to attend court due to financial circumstances and/or the inability to travel have attended court to address their cases. And both the community and offender have benefitted greatly from completed community service.

COC provides a vital service to the community. Not only is the court able to clear thousands of unresolved cases that would have otherwise remained pending, but social service providers also assist COC participants at no cost to the taxpayer. COC provides for alternative sentences such as community service and programs deemed appropriate for individual offenses. COC makes available resources for housing and other services to help participants address areas of need. By the time the participants graduate from COC, the graduates are entrenched in or one step closer to stable housing, employment and have had their legal matters resolved.

These milestones are necessary to end the cycle of homelessness which COC is tackling, one participant at a time. The permanent establishment of COC is integral and necessary for our community.

Thank you for taking these comments into consideration.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELawe KANAKA
Office of the Director
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Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 15, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 280 HD3 – RELATING TO THE COMMUNITY OUTREACH COURT.**

Hearing: March 17, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this bill and defers to the Judiciary, the Offices of the Public Defender, and Prosecutors. The community outreach court process assists non-violent individuals in addressing their pending legal issues that can be barriers to employment or the ability to secure housing. The community outreach court is a successful example of cross-branch collaboration to reduce homelessness, and it improves the public trust in the government.

PURPOSE: This bill permanently establishes and appropriates funds for the Community Outreach Court as a division of the District Court of the First Circuit. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD3)

The Committee on Human Services & Homelessness amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs further amended this measure by:

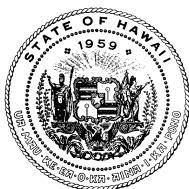
- (1) Providing that the Community Outreach Court may only hear and dispose of cases involving nonviolent, nonfelony offenses under laws of the State and ordinances of the City and County of Honolulu determined to be appropriate by the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu;
- (2) Amending the process for the prosecuting attorney to select participants into the Community Outreach Court and enter into plea agreement negotiations;
- (3) Authorizing the Judiciary, pursuant to its appropriation for the operations of the Community Outreach Court, to enter into intergovernmental agreements or memorandums of understanding with any agency of the State or the City and County of Honolulu for the purpose of collaboration, cooperation, coordination, combination of resources, funding distribution, or the administration of Community Outreach Court; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Committee on Finance made further amendments by:

- (1) Changing the number of positions to an unspecified number; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

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

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA
MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I



Katherine Aumer, PhD
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
LUNA HO'OMALU O KA PAPA

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378, Room 256
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary
In Support of H.B. 280 H.D. 3
RELATING TO COMMUNITY OUTREACH COURT
March 18, 2025 9:45 a.m., Room 016 and Video

CHAIRPERSON
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Forrest Wells, MSCP, LMHC
Kristin Will, MACL, CSAC

EX-OFFICIO:

Marian Tsuji, Deputy Director
Behavioral Health
Administration

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii law, HRS §334-10, established the State Council on Mental Health as a 21-member body to advise on the allocation of resources, statewide needs, and programs affecting more than one county as well as to advocate for adults with serious mental illness, children with serious emotional disturbances, individuals with mental illness or emotional problems, including those with co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Members are residents from diverse backgrounds representing mental health service providers and recipients, students and youth, parents, and family members. Members include representatives of state agencies on mental health, criminal justice, housing, Medicaid, social services, vocational rehabilitation, and education. Members include representatives from the Hawaii Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances and county service area boards on mental health and substance abuse.

The State Council on Mental Health ("Council") fully supports HB280 HD3. This legislation acknowledges the success of the Community Outreach Court (COC) project in O'ahu and takes a crucial step toward establishing it as a permanent program.

The Council recognizes that individuals experiencing homelessness or transience often encounter legal challenges stemming from circumstances beyond their control. A permanent COC provides an essential alternative to traditional legal proceedings, preventing unnecessary and costly entanglements with the criminal justice system. This approach prioritizes public health, rehabilitation, and cost-effectiveness while ensuring that individuals receive appropriate support rather than punitive measures.

By solidifying the COC as a long-term solution, this measure not only enhances the well-being of affected individuals but also reduces strain on law enforcement, courts, and public resources. It represents a forward-thinking strategy that aligns with evidence-based practices for addressing homelessness and mental health challenges in our communities.

For these reasons, the Council strongly urges the passage of this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support. Should you have any questions, please contact us at
DOH.SCMHChairperson@doh.hawaii.gov.

VISION: A Hawaii where people of all ages with mental health challenges can enjoy recovery in the community of their choice.

MISSION: To advocate for a Hawaii where all persons affected by mental illness can access necessary treatment and support to live full lives in the community of their choice.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 280 HD 3
RELATING TO THE COMMUNITY OUTREACH COURT**

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 18, 2025

9:45AM

Room 016

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB 280 HD 3 which permanently establishes and appropriates funds for the Community Outreach Court (COC) as a division of the District Court of the First Circuit. OHA appreciates measures such as HD 280 HD 3 which shift the focus of the criminal justice system from punishment to rehabilitation. Native Hawaiians are disproportionately impacted by the system, comprising approximately 37% of the state's correctional facilities, while representing only 21% of the total state population.¹ Native Hawaiians also comprise 28 percent of the State's homeless population,² with Hawai'i at the highest rate of homelessness in the United States.³

The COC assists non-violent offenders who are charged with offenses that disproportionately impact the homeless community by making court attendance more accessible through holding court in community locations where offenders are found, resolving any active charges, and utilizing alternative sentences such as community service work in cases where prior court judgments could not be satisfied and offenders lack the present ability to pay fines and fees. By resolving these cases, the participants are in a better position to obtain necessities such as jobs, income assistance, and housing. The community outreach court social worker assesses offenders for participation in programs deemed appropriate based upon an offender's need for mental health services,

¹ "Creating Better Outcomes, Safer Communities – Final Report of the House Concurrent Resolution 85 Task Force on Prison Reform to the Hawai'i Legislature – 2019 Regular Session," HCR 85 Task Force; Legislative Reference Bureau (December 2018) at p. xiii, https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HCR-85_task_force_final_report.pdf

² "2023 Point in Time Counts," Hawai'i Health Data Warehouse (June 29, 2023), <https://hhdw.org/na-2023-point-in-time-counts/>

³ "Which states have the highest and lowest rates of homelessness?" USAFacts (February 28, 2025), <https://usafacts.org/articles/which-states-have-the-highest-and-lowest-rates-of-homelessness/>

substance abuse treatment, sustenance, shelter, or other appropriate available social services and assists the offenders in obtaining and voluntarily participating in these referred services.

Since its inception in 2017, the community outreach court program has proven successful, addressing over 10,000 cases, recalling over 900 bench warrants, lifting more than 7,000 driver license stoppers, and providing assistance to over 600 participants at community-based sites in the judicial districts where participants may live or have access to mental health services, substance abuse treatment, sustenance, shelter, or other social services and who have completed more than 7,000 community service work hours.

For these reasons, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs urges this committee to **PASS HB 280 HD 3**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony on this critical measure.



HB280 HD2 Outreach Court

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Tuesday, Mar 18, 2025: 9:45: Room 016 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HB280 HD2:

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services.

HSAC supports Alternative sentencing of offenders for established needs for substance abuse treatment and mental health services following shelter or other social services.

Formal substance abuse treatment such as residential and intensive outpatient is still the most effective approach to achieve functionality and lasting recovery for offenders and community people.

Substance use disorder treatment coupled with mental health services is essential for offenders because it addresses the underlying issues that often contribute to criminal behavior and helps break the cycle of addiction and recidivism. Here's why this is important:

1. **High Rates of Substance Abuse Among Offenders:** Many offenders struggle with substance use disorders. Studies show that a significant proportion of crimes, including theft, assault, and drug-related offenses, are committed under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
2. **Reduces Recidivism:** Treating substance abuse can lower the likelihood of reoffending. Offenders who receive effective treatment are more likely to develop coping skills and lead crime-free lives after release.
3. **Addresses Root Causes of Criminal Behavior:** Substance abuse often coexists with mental health issues, trauma, or socioeconomic challenges.

Treatment programs can provide a comprehensive approach to addressing these interconnected factors.

4. **Improves Public Safety:** By helping offenders overcome addiction, substance abuse treatment reduces the risk of substance-fueled criminal activity, thereby improving community safety.

5. **Economic Benefits:** Providing treatment is often less expensive than incarceration. It also reduces the costs associated with repeated arrests, court proceedings, and imprisonment.

6. **Promotes Rehabilitation:** Substance abuse treatment supports offenders in reintegrating into society, securing employment, and rebuilding relationships, which are crucial for long-term success.

7. **Legal Mandates and Support:** Courts increasingly mandate substance abuse treatment as part of sentencing or probation, recognizing its importance in addressing criminal behavior effectively.

By addressing addiction, offenders are given an opportunity to rebuild their lives, contributing positively to society rather than being trapped in cycles of crime and incarceration.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for questions.



HAWAII HEALTH &
HARM REDUCTION CENTER

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*"Reducing harm,
promoting health,
creating wellness, and
fighting stigma
in Hawai'i and
the Pacific."*

TESTIMONY IN [SUPPORT/OPPOSITION] OF [MEASURE #]

TO: Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Heather Lusk, ED of Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center

DATE: Tuesday March 18th 9:45 AM

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) **strongly supports HB 280 HD3** which would appropriate funds and make permanent the Community Outreach Court (COC) as part of the District Court of the First Circuit. The Community Outreach Court has been a successful collaboration between the Judiciary, the Public Defender and the Honolulu Prosecutor's office along with support from community-based agencies such as HHHRC.

HHHRC's mission is to *reduce harm, promote health, create wellness and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific*. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

HHHRC is proud to have supported the COC from the beginning by providing on-site case management to the participants, and for the past year has hosted the COC in HHHRC's offices in Kakaako to make the court accessible to those needing its services in town. HHHRC has seen first hand how participants of the COC thrive once their cases are resolved, and is also a site for the community-based hours that are needed from participants in order to satisfy their requirements. HHHRC has found it easier to house COC participants, and has seen the collaboration thrive to ensure some of our most vulnerable get the support they need. We need this court to be permanent.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Heather Lusk, Executive Director, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center



HB-280-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 6:32:54 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/18/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jillian Anderson	Testifying for Waikiki Neighborhood Board	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

WAIKIKI NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD*Legislative Permitted Interaction Group*

The Waikiki Neighborhood Board stands in **support** of HB280 HD3.

The permanent establishment of the Community Outreach Court would allow the positive impacts made by the pilot project to continue indefinitely. A streamlined process and a tailored approach to its target population makes Community Outreach Courts a fantastic alternative to the traditional legal system, particularly in outcomes for homeless individuals. The Community Outreach Court is the optimal combination of effectively using of our state's resources while achieving better results.

For the First Circuit, which includes Waikiki, the permanency of the Community Outreach Court will allow our community to more effectively work with individuals who are homeless or who have mental health challenges and set them on a path with fewer barriers to attaining stable, permanent housing and all the benefits that come with it.

The Waikiki Neighborhood Board asks for your continued support of this measure which would greatly benefit our community.

Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i

KAWAIILOA

March 18th, 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Hearing Time: 9:45 AM

Location: State Capitol Conference Room 016

Re: HB280 HD3, Relating to The Community Outreach Court

Aloha e Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i hui, we are writing in **support of HB280 HD3 relating to the community outreach court**. This bill permanently establishes and appropriates funds for the Community Outreach Court as a division of the District Court of the First Circuit.

Permanently establishing and funding a community outreach court with a dedicated function for those who cannot consistently access court appointments is a significant step forward in improving efficiency and equity within our judicial system. It further ensures that non-violent offenders are not ingrained in the criminal justice system by the issuance of bench warrants. Given that homeless individuals often lack reliable transportation and other effective means to attend court, they are disproportionately affected by strict court attendance requirements. This challenge is especially prevalent among homeless youth accused of non-violent crimes, who are often victims of their circumstances rather than choosing to neglect their legal responsibilities to the court.

A steady court record with multiple bench warrants not only perpetuates legal struggles but also significantly impedes reintegration efforts by making these efforts to secure employment and stability more difficult. By permanently implementing a community outreach court, we can begin to change the cyclical relationship between homelessness and criminal charges and provide a pathway toward rehabilitation and services rather than repeated punishment. Ultimately, we see this proposal as a highly beneficial addition to the criminal justice system and hope the state will follow through with its establishment.

Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth; promoting equity in the justice system; and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs. We seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth homelessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.

Please support HB280 HD3

LATE



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creating wellness, and
fighting stigma
in Hawai'i and
the Pacific."*

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 280, HD 3

TO: Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, & JDC Committee

FROM: Nikos Leverenz, Policy & Advancement Manager

DATE: March 18, 2025 (9:45 AM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) strongly supports HB 280, HD 3, which would appropriate funds and make permanent the Community Outreach Court (COC) as part of the District Court of the First Circuit. The Community Outreach Court has been a successful collaboration between the Judiciary, the Public Defender and the Honolulu Prosecutor's office along with support from community-based agencies such as HHHRC.

HHHRC is proud to have supported the COC from the beginning by providing on-site case management to the participants, and for the past year has hosted the COC in HHHRC's offices in Kaka'ako to make the court accessible to those needing its services in town. HHHRC has seen firsthand how participants of the COC thrive once their cases are resolved, and is also a site for the community-based hours that are needed from participants in order to satisfy their requirements. HHHRC has found it easier to house COC participants, and has seen the collaboration thrive to ensure some of our most vulnerable get the support they need. Our community needs this court to be permanent.

HHHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many determinants individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those related to substance use and mental health conditions, and have also been deeply impacted by trauma related to histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-280-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 4:46:43 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/18/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Schultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this initiative.

HB-280-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 5:25:03 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/18/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Rich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee

My Name is Linda Rich, I am a social worker and addictions treatment professional and currently serve as an interim Hawaii Parolling AAuthority Board member.

I stronly support HB280 HD3 which establishes a permanant Community Outreach Court. This court, with it's multi -agency collabration serves as an effective means of intervening to prevent incarceration of the extremely vulnerable homeless population ,combining needed services with judicial supervision. I have seen the numbers of homeless, drug addicted, mentally ill individuals who end up incarcerated but would be better served by this court. Incarceration involves great cost to the State as well as to the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals I urge you to support this bill.

Mahalo for considering this testimony.

Linda Rich

HB-280-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 4:49:28 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/18/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Denise Boisvert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I FULLY SUPPORT this much needed bill.

HB-280-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 5:29:55 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/18/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Jorgensen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT this much needed bill.