

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**  
**E HUIKALA A MA'EMA'E NŌ**  
235 S. Beretania Street, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
(808) 587-4160

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.)

TO: The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair  
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

FROM: Mark Patterson, Chair  
Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

SUBJECT: Senate Concurrent Resolution 20, Requesting the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to comprehensively reevaluate its policies regarding in-person contact visitation at correctional facilities throughout the State to best support incarcerated persons in staying connected with loved ones who can help them on their journey of rehabilitation.

Hearing: Monday, March 10, 2025; 3:05 p.m.  
State Capitol, Room 225

Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC, the Commission) **strongly supports** Senate Concurrent Resolution 20, Requesting the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to comprehensively reevaluate its policies regarding in-person contact visitation at correctional facilities throughout the State to best support incarcerated persons in staying connected with loved ones who can help them on their journey of rehabilitation.

Since the Commission gained staff in 2022, the Commission has consistently reported<sup>1</sup> on the importance and impact of in-person contact visitation, and the lack of in-person contact visitation offered throughout the state correctional facilities. The Commission has urged the Department to restore in-person contact visitation at every facility. As stated in the Commission's most recent report specific to reentry, *Hoe Amau: The state of reentry in Hawaii*, "in-person contact visitation has been shown to significantly lower recidivism rates and encourage positive behavior within

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<sup>1</sup> See the [2022 HCSOC Annual Report](#), [2023 HCSOC Annual Report](#), [2024 HCSOC Annual Report](#), [HCCC August 2022 Commissioner Tour Report](#), [OCCC February 2023 Commissioner Tour Report](#), [KCCC March 2023 Commissioner Tour Report](#), [HCCC April 2023 Commissioner Tour Report](#), [HCCC May 2023 Follow Up from August 2022](#), [WCCC September 2023 Commissioner Tour Report](#), [KCF November 2023 Commissioner Tour Report](#), [KCCC March 2024 Commissioner Tour Report](#), [HCCC April 2024 Commissioner Tour Report](#), [MCCC June 2024 Commissioner Tour Report](#), [OCCC July 2024 Commissioner Tour Report](#), [WCCC August 2024 Commissioner Tour Report](#), [KCF October 2024 Commissioner Tour Report](#), and [Hoe Amau: The current state of reentry in Hawaii](#) report.

correctional facilities.<sup>2</sup> While video visits can help maintain connections, research indicates they should complement, not replace, in-person visitation, as physical visits provide deeper emotional benefits and foster stronger bonds than virtual alternatives.<sup>3</sup> By prioritizing parent-child contact and conducting research on the effects of incarceration on families—particularly the dynamics of fathers and children—Hawaii can create policies and programs that address intergenerational impacts, promote family stability, and enhance public safety by reducing the collateral consequences of incarceration on future generations.”

In addition to positively impacting parent-child relationships, in-person contact visitation also allows an opportunity for family members to stay connected to their incarcerated loved one, allowing for an easier reentry process. The report *Hoe Amau* ultimately included the recommendation to establish consistent in-person contact visitation policies and practices across all facilities to maintain family and community ties essential for successful reentry.

For the above reasons, the Commission strongly supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 20. Should you have additional questions, the Oversight Coordinator, Christin Johnson, can be reached at 808-900-2200 or at [christin.m.johnson@hawaii.gov](mailto:christin.m.johnson@hawaii.gov).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>2</sup> Prison Policy Initiative, *DOJ Study: Video Visitation in Prison Has Its Place but Shouldn't Replace In-Person Visits*, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2015/01/28/doj-study-video-visitation/> (last visited Nov. 25, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

**SCR-20**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:42:34 AM

Testimony for PSM on 3/10/2025 3:05:00 PM

**LATE**

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

Comments:

Please pass this resolution and urge the Department to actually be a palce of rehabilitation. The limited in-person visits that are available at the Halawa Correctional Facility have been canceled for months on end. No contact visits for more than 5 years is inhumane.

Sincerely,

Jordan

Honolulu, HI 96813