JOSH GREEN, M.D. GOVERNOR KE KIA'ĂINA



GOV. MSG. NO. 1330

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

June 26, 2025

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi President of the Senate, and Members of the Senate Thirty-Third State Legislature State Capitol, Room 409 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813 The Honorable Nadine Nakamura Speaker, and Members of the House of Representatives Thirty-Third State Legislature State Capitol, Room 431 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Aloha President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

This is to inform you that on June 26, 2025, the following bill was signed into law:

H.B. NO. 727, H.D. 1, S.D. 2, C.D. 1 RELATING TO THE WOMEN'S COURT. ACT 228

Mahalo,

oh Mren M.D.

Josh Green, M.D. Governor, State of Hawai'i

Approved by the Governor

on JUN 2 6 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025 STATE OF HAWAII

A BILL FOR AN ACT

ACT 228

727

H.D. 1

S.D. 2 C.D. 1

H.B. NO.

RELATING TO THE WOMEN'S COURT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

PART I

2 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there has been a significant increase in the number of women in Hawai'i jails and 3 4 prisons over the past forty years, resulting in a higher 5 proportion of women who are incarcerated. Research reflects 6 that for women, histories of abuse, trauma, poverty, mental illness, substance use disorders, and unhealthy relationships 7 8 intersect with their entry into criminal behavior. Women 9 offenders also face unique barriers to success after 10 incarceration. They are more likely to be primary caregivers 11 for young children, have lower educational attainment, lack 12 stable work history, and experience economic or social 13 marginalization, which prevents them from having more positive 14 outcomes.

15 The legislature further finds that Act 243, Session Laws of 16 Hawaii 2022, established a three-year women's court pilot 17 program in the circuit court of the first circuit. This

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1	program,	known as Mohala Wahine, focuses on non-violent women	
2	who are at high risk of recidivism and in need of multiple		
3	services such as substance abuse treatment, therapy, or housing.		
4	The program began accepting participants in January 2023, with a		
5	goal of admitting twenty women each year. As of August 2024,		
6	twenty-three women are currently participating in the program,		
7	with eleven participants in phase one of treatment and twelve		
8	participants in phase two of treatment.		
9	The	purpose of this Act is to:	
10	(1)	Permanently establish the women's court program in the	
11		first circuit;	
12	(2)	Establish a two-year women's court pilot program in	
13		the circuit court of the Kona division of the third	
14		circuit, which is intended to acknowledge the distinct	
15		pathways that lead women into the criminal justice	
16		system and address their individualized needs; and	
17	(3)	Require the judiciary to submit reports to the	
18		legislature regarding the pilot program for women's	
19		court.	
20		PART II	

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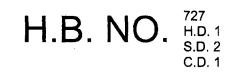
727 H.D. 1 S.D. 2 C.D. 1

H.B. NO.

		727
H.B.	INO.	H.D. 1 S.D. 2
		S.D. 2
		C.D. 1

1	SECI	TION 2. Chapter 603, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is		
2	amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated			
3	and to re	and to read as follows:		
4	" <u>§</u> 60	3- Women's court program; first circuit. (a)		
5	There sha	ll be established within the first circuit of the		
6	judiciary the women's court program. The program shall			
7	implement trauma-informed and evidence-based practices, employ			
8	gender-responsive programming, collaborate with stakeholders,			
9	and provide services to women in the court system with the goal			
10	of diverting participants from incarceration, supporting their			
11	success in the community, and reducing recidivism.			
12	(b)	The services offered by the program shall address the		
13	following areas:			
14	(1)	Trauma and mental health treatment;		
15	(2)	Family support, including parenting, education, and		
16		relationship improvement;		
17	(3)	Life-skills training;		
18	(4)	Education and vocational training;		
19	(5)	Domestic violence prevention;		
20	(6)	Medical services and health education;		
21	<u>(7)</u>	Substance abuse detection, prevention, and treatment;		

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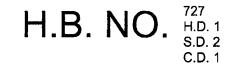
1	(8) Mentoring; and
2	(9) Housing support."
3	PART III
4	SECTION 3. (a) There shall be established within the
5	third circuit Kona division of the judiciary the women's court
6	pilot program. The women's court pilot program shall be under
7	the supervision of the big island drug court. The judiciary
8	shall be responsible for providing mental health services under
9	this pilot program. The pilot program shall implement trauma-
10	informed and evidence-based practices, employ gender-responsive
11	programming, collaborate with stakeholders, and provide services
12	to women in the court system with the goal of diverting
13	participants from incarceration, supporting their success in the
14	community, and reducing recidivism.
15	(b) The services offered by the pilot program shall
16	address the following areas:
17	(1) Trauma and mental health treatment;
18	(2) Family support, including parenting, education, and
19	relationship improvement;
20	<pre>(3) Life-skills training;</pre>
21	(4) Education and vocational training;

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1	(5)	Domestic violence prevention;
2	(6)	Medical services and health education;
3	(7)	Substance abuse detection, prevention, and treatment;
4	(8)	Mentoring; and
5	(9)	Housing support.
6	SECT	ION 4. The judiciary shall submit a report of its
7	findings	and recommendations, including any proposed
8	legislati	on, on the pilot program to the governor and
9	legislatu	re no later than forty days prior to the convening of
10	the regul	ar sessions of 2026 and 2027, regarding:
11	(1)	The status of the women's court pilot program;
12	(2)	The number of women accepted into the women's court
13		pilot program;
14	(3)	The number of women who were eligible to participate
15		in the women's court pilot program but who could not
16		be accepted into the pilot program because of pilot
17		program limitations;
18	(4)	The number of women completing the women's court pilot
19		program;
20	(5)	The number of women who were removed from the women's
21		court pilot program; and

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1 (6) Recommendations as to whether the women's court pilot 2 program should: 3 (A) Continue as a pilot program; 4 (B) Expand to include additional participants; 5 Provide additional services; or (C) 6 (D) Be discontinued. 7 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general 8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$514,900 or so much 9 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and 10 \$557,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 11 2026-2027 for mental health, substance abuse treatment, and 12 other services and equipment, and the establishment of one full-13 time equivalent (1.0 FTE) temporary Kona drug court probation 14 supervisor position for the women's court pilot program 15 established pursuant to section 3 of this Act. 16 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the judiciary 17 for the purposes of this Act. 18 PART IV 19 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025; 20 provided that part III shall be repealed on June 30, 2027.

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APPROVED this 26th day of June , 2025

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And Drue no

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

Date: April 30, 2025 Honolulu, Hawaii

We hereby certify that the above-referenced Bill on this day passed Final Reading in the House of Representatives of the Thirty-Third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025.

Mudmi K. Mhm

Nadine K. Nakamura Speaker House of Representatives

Mili lle

Brian L. Takeshita Chief Clerk House of Representatives

THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF HAWAI'I

Date: April 30, 2025 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

We hereby certify that the foregoing Bill this day passed Final Reading in the Senate

of the Thirty-Third Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2025.

President of the Senate

Clerk of the Senate