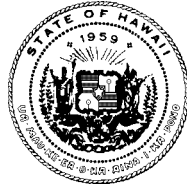


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT
DIRECTOR

CATHY BETTS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 4, 2020

TO: The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

The Honorable Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
House Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2111 – RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS**

Hearing: February 7, 2020, 9:45 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure and provides comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill requires the department of human services to work with the department of public safety to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility. Makes an appropriation.

Improving contacts and relationships between children and families with their incarcerated parents at the Waiawa facility will benefit multiple generations and are first steps to improve the child's and family's overall well-being as well as the incarcerated individual's return to society.

Here is a link to the HCR 205/SCR 7 (2019) Report to the Legislature:

<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Visiting-Centers-at-all-State-Correctional-Facilities.pdf>. The work group participants worked collaboratively over the summer to address this long standing and important social issue.

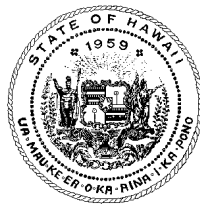
Under the current administration, DHS is committed to a multigenerational approach to end poverty in Hawaii, and it is well known that growing up with an incarcerated parent is an adverse early childhood experience that has long lasting impact on children into adulthood. DHS will work with family members, community stakeholders, members of the Legislature and staff, the Office of Youth Services (OYS), the Department of Public Safety, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and other interested parties to address root causes and reduce the impact of incarceration on Hawaii's children and families, especially native Hawaiian families who are overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

DHS will work with and support OYS as it drafts the proposal to the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, under The Second Chance Act Addressing the Needs of Incarcerated Parents and Their Minor Children.

However, DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation of general funds not replace budget priorities identified in the Executive Budget. It will take additional investment by the Legislature to support this ongoing work to build a comprehensive and successful evidence based approach to support families involved and impacted by the justice system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
919 Ala Moana Boulevard, 4th Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

NOLAN P. ESPINDA
DIRECTOR

Maria C. Cook
Deputy Director
Administration

Shari L. Kimoto
Deputy Director
Corrections

Renee R. Sonobe Hong
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No. _____

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2111
RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.**

by
Nolan P. Espinda, Director
Department of Public Safety

House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Representative Nadine K. Nakamura, Vice Chair

House Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, and Military Affairs
Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Cedric Asuega Gates, Vice Chair

Friday, February 7, 2020; 9:45 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

Chairs San Buenaventura and Takayama, Vice Chairs Nakamura and Gates, and
Members of the Committees:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports the intent of House Bill (HB) 2111 to work with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish, develop, and implement a pilot visitation and family resource center at the Waiawa Correctional Facility on Oahu.

PSD's data confirms that approximately 4,000 children a year are affected by parental incarceration, and the Department reiterates its interest in continuing to participate with DHS and the Family Reunification Working Group and other entities in developing the proposed pilot visitation and family resource center. PSD supports the concept of starting the pilot program at a smaller facility and providing modest funding to DHS and PSD to assist in making the program and facility modifications necessary to establish the pilot visitation and family resource center. The smaller scope will

Testimony on HB 2111
House Committee on Human Services
and Homelessness and
House Committee on Public Safety,
Veterans and Military Affairs
February 7, 2020
Page 2

enable more efficient establishment and monitoring of the program and greater ease in making adjustments to increase successful outcomes. The lessons learned may then be applied to developing Visitation and Family Resource Centers at other correctional facilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

STATE OF HAWAI‘I
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender,
State of Hawai‘i to the House Committee on Human
Services & Homelessness and to the House
Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs**

February 6, 2020

H.B. No. 2111: RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF
 INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

Chairs San Buenaventura and Takayama, Vice Chairs Nakamura and Asuega Gates, and Members of the Committees:

The Office of the Public Defender strongly supports H.B. No. 2111.

We strongly support any effort to maintain and foster the bonds between incarcerated parents and their children. Opportunities for incarcerated parents to have meaningful in-person contact visits with their children are increasingly being restricted. “No contact” visits are now the standard practice at Halawa Correctional Facility, Oahu Community Correctional Center, and Maui Community Correctional Center. An incarcerated parent with a child can no longer hold, touch or sit with their child. They must speak through glass or clear plastic partitions that restrict healthy and positive communication between an incarcerated parent and their child. This is particularly devastating for incarcerated parents with young children. Our office supports the intent of this measure as we believe maintaining the parent-child bond and family bonds are in the public interest, in the best interest of the child(ren), in the best interest of incarcerated parents, and in the best interest of families.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES
1010 Richards Street, Suite 314
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

February 3, 2020

TO: The Honorable Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

The Honorable Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
House Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, and Military Affairs

FROM: Merton Chinen, Executive Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2111 - RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED
INDIVIDUALS**

Hearing: Friday, February 7, 2020, 9:45 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

OFFICE'S POSITION: Office of Youth Services (OYS) supports the measure but requests that any appropriation not affect the priorities in the Executive Biennium Budget. Children of incarcerated parents are faced with risk factors that often lead to adverse childhood experiences, and problems in domains such as economics, education, social, and emotional functioning. OYS, in collaboration with community stakeholders, is also applying for a competitive grant solicitation issued by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, under The Second Chance Act Addressing the Needs of Incarcerated Parents and Their Minor Children, to address areas identified and recommendations made by the Work Group established by HCR 205 and SCR SD1 (2019 Legislature).

PURPOSE: The purpose of the measure is to require the Department of Human Services to work with the Department of Public Safety to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

Helping Hawai'i Live Well

To: Representative Joy San Buenaventura, Chair, Representative Nadine Nakamura, Vice Chair, Members, House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

To: Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair, Representative Cedrick Asuega Gates, Vice Chair, Members, House Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, and Military Affairs

From: Trisha Kajimura, Executive Director

Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2111 RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

Hearing: February 7, 2020, 9:45 am, CR 329

Thank you for hearing **House Bill 21112**, which:

1. Acknowledges adverse experiences faced by children of incarcerated parents;
2. Encourages continued engagement between the Departments of Human Services, Public Safety and community groups to improve visitation at State correctional facilities;
3. Requires the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa Correctional Facility that shall be operated by a non-profit organization contracted by the department of human services and include trauma-informed professionals who shall serve as liaisons and ho'okele for families affected by incarceration; and
4. Appropriate funds for work necessary to establish, develop and implement the pilot visitation and family resource center.

Mental Health America of Hawaii (MHAH) is a 501(c)3 organization founded in Hawai'i in 1942 that serves the community by promoting mental health through advocacy, education and service. We have been a leader in improving the care and treatment of people with mental illness in Hawaii through policy change. We support youth mental health in Hawaii through our Youth Suicide and Bullying Prevention Program and through our advocacy work.

The incarceration of a household member is considered an adverse childhood experience (ACE). ACE research in the past 2 decades shows a direct link between childhood trauma and adult onset of chronic disease, including mental health issues such as depression and suicide. We can help the children of adults incarcerated in Hawaii by reducing that trauma through family-affirming and assisting visitation programs like this one. This type of visitation will help to maintain family bonds through periods of incarceration and lessening the impact of trauma for the children. Programs such as these support the mental health of families and children.

Thank you for considering my **testimony in support of HB 2111**. Please contact me at trisha.kajimura@mentalhealthhawaii.org or (808)521-1846 if you have any questions.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Rick Collins, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hawaii

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children of West Hawaii

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm

Reduction Center

Hawaii Student Television

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kokua Ohana Aloha (KOA)

Maui Youth and Family Services

Na Pu'uwai Molokai Native

Hawaiian Health Care Systems

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together (PACT)

PHOCUSED

PFLAG – Kona Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest and

Hawaiian Islands

Residential Youth Services

& Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

February 2, 2020

To: Representative Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
And members of the Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, and Military Affairs

Testimony in Support of HB 2111 Relating to Children and Family of Incarcerated Individuals

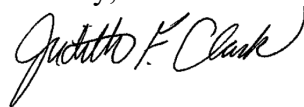
Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 2111 Relating to Children and Family of Incarcerated Individuals.

Children of incarcerated parents experience grief and loss, similar to the experience of divorce or the death of a parent. Studies show that children of incarcerated parents are at increased risk of abuse or neglect, and more likely to have mental problems, and difficulty in school. Children of incarcerated parents are seven times more likely to enter the juvenile or adult correctional systems themselves. Regular visitation provides opportunities to sustain the parent-child bond while a parent is incarcerated, which can alleviate many of these problems.

Prisoners who have regular contact with their children benefit as well. They are less likely to violate prison rules and create trouble for prison authorities. They are more likely to take advantage of rehabilitation and educational opportunities while in prison. Regular contact with children increases the chances of successful reintegration into the community when a parent is released from prison.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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

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



COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Joy San Buenaventura, Chair

Rep. Nadine Nakamura, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, VETERANS, & MILITARY AFFAIRS

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Cedric Gates, Vice Chair

Friday, February 7, 2020

9:45 am - Room 329

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 2111 - VISITATION & FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Aloha Chairs San Buenaventura and Takayama 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 families of **ASHLEY GREY, DAISY KASITATI, JOEY O'MALLEY, JESSICA FORTSON** and all the people who have died under the "care and custody" of the state including the ten people who died in the last 5 months of 2019 and for **JAMES BORLING-SALAS** who was beaten and died on January 16th. We also remember the approximately 5,200 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars or under the "care and custody" of the Department of Public Safety on any given day and we are always mindful that more than 1,200 of Hawai'i's imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad - thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

HB 2111 requires the department of human services to work with the department of public safety to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at Wahiawa Waiawa correctional facility.

Community Alliance on Prisons is part of the working group established by the legislature in HCR 205. The department of human services has convened the meetings and has been wonderful in seeking input from everyone, keeping notes, and putting together the report¹ that was released on December 26, 2019. Kudos to Malia Taum for her patience and diligence and to the department of public safety's Shari Kimoto and Waiawa Warden Sean Ornellas for listening to the community and working with our group.

This has been an interesting collaboration as we continue to work together to make visitation more meaningful for the imprisoned person and their loved ones and friends. We know that in-person, contact visitation, where people can eat together, play games together, pray together and touch is crucial to a person's humanity.

¹ HOUSE RESOLUTION 205 & SENATE RESOLUTION 7 SENATE DRAFT 1 (2019) REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, TO WORK WITH THE FAMILY REUNIFICATION WORKING GROUP AND OTHER COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO ESTABLISH VISITATION CENTERS AT ALL STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES AND JAILS. December 26, 2019. <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Visiting-Centers-at-all-State-Correctional-Facilities.pdf>.

“Nothing can replace sitting with a parent and hugging a parent,” said Ann Adalist-Estrin, director of the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated at Rutgers University.

Excerpts from a 2017 article in Stateline, *Face-to-Face Family Visits Return to Some Jails*²

A study of prisons in Minnesota published in the *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, a quarterly academic 2017 publication, found that inmates who had visits from their family, friends or counselors were much **less likely to be convicted of another crime** once they got out of jail. Of 16,420 inmates studied, recidivism rates for those who had visits of any kind from their families were 13 percent lower for subsequent felonies and 25 percent lower for technical violations, such as breaking parole.

“Psychology and common sense tells you that it’s better for the prisoners and families to sit across from each other and see each other, rather than talking through an iPad,” said Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins. (In Texas, a county judge is the chief executive of the county and its top elected official.)

Keeping regular ties with children is particularly important for the children of inmates, said (Rebecca Schlafer, who was part of the study of prisons in Minnesota. “The overwhelming majority of people who are incarcerated are getting out one day — and most have children,” she said.

The U.S. had about 2.2 million people incarcerated in 2015, the latest numbers available, according to the U.S. Justice Department. And more than half of them are parents. According to a Pew Charitable Trusts study at the start of the decade, **54 percent of inmates have children** age 17 or younger. One in every 28 children in America (4 percent) has a parent who is incarcerated, according to the study. (Pew also funds *Stateline*.) That’s 2.7 million children with a jailed parent.

The rates are higher for some minorities, according to the study. One in nine African-American children (11 percent) and one in 28 Hispanic children (4 percent) have a parent in jail — compared to one in 57 for white children (2 percent).

Discussing the importance of visitation with government agencies is a great first step. We are still working together and Community Alliance on Prisons is excited about this step towards transforming visitation in Hawai‘i. We urge the committees to be part of this transformation that brings family and community together and to enthusiastically support this measure.

I will close with this wisdom from a child: *“I think the child and incarcerated parent should take like 10- 20 minutes to eat a meal together, this allows “like old times” to happen; kind of like an incentive to both parent and child - parents may work harder to get out and get back to their child. It would also take them out of the “court” setting and allow for healing.”*

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify. Please pass this bill onto FIN with a strong recommendation for passage!

² Face-to-Face Family Visits Return to Some Jails, STATELINE ARTICLE By: Mindy Fetterman, February 15, 2017. <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2017/02/15/face-to-face-family-visits-return-to-some-jails>



Committees: Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, and Military Affairs
Hearing Date/Time: Friday, February 7, 2020, 9:45 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 329
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in Support of H.B. 2111

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Takayama, and members of the Committees:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i writes in **support** of H.B. 2111, which would require the Department of Human Services to work with the Department of Public Safety to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa Correctional Facility.

Research shows that visits and maintaining family ties are among the best ways to reduce recidivism¹. Imprisonment is not one-dimensional as thousands of families are victims of mass incarceration. Recognizing the benefits of parent-child visiting and improving their current environments to be more family-friendly and provide greater opportunities for visiting is a part of a better and improved vision for corrections.

The HCR 85 Task Force report on prison reform states, "While incarcerated, every inmate should be provided with the resources and opportunity to build and maintain family relationships, thereby strengthening the support system available to them upon release." We agree which is why ACLU of Hawai'i supports H.B. 2111.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Monica Espitia
Smart Justice Campaign Director
ACLU of Hawai'i

The mission of the ACLU of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai'i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving Hawai'i for 50 years.

¹ Separation by Bars and Miles: Visitation in State Prison, Prison Policy Initiative, October 20, 2015, available at <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/prisonvisits.html>.



Adult Friends for Youth

Testimony on HB2111 Relating to Children and Family of Incarcerated Individuals

**PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER**

Deborah L.K. Spencer-Chun, M.S.W.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Chair of the Board
Bradford Harrison**

*Vice-Chair of the Board
Maura Okamoto*

*Treasurer
Jason Shimizu**

*Secretary
Jean Palm McIntosh*

Directors:

Steven M. Baldrige
Arnold M. Baptiste, Jr.*
Carolyn Berry Wilson*
Reginald V. Castanares
Paul Cunney
Frank De Lima
Daniel Dolan
Dennis Francis
Jeffrey A. Hawk*
T. Michael Hogan
Garrett Iha
Keiko Kawaharada
William M. Kawashima
Damien T.K. Kim
Melanie Martin
Brad Myers*
Leilani Palafox
T. George Paris
Catherine Payne
Malia Peters
Susan Spangler*

BOARD OF ADVISORS

*Dennis Lombardi
Dr. Kevin Lye
Margie O'Neill
James K. Schuler
Phil Shimmin**

ADVISORY COUNCIL

*Rose Albano
Jomer Domingo
Scott Fuji
Cyrus Johnasen
Chelsey Ogata
Anson Paiva
Lorinda Riley
Chelsey Tsuda
Chris Ulep
Rowel Yasay*

FOUNDER & PRESIDENT EMERITUS

Sidney M. Rosen, M.S.W., Ph.D

**Past Chair of the Board*

Submitted to: Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Representative Nadine K. Nakamura, Vice Chair

Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs
Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Cedric Asuega Gates, Vice Chair

Submitted by: Deborah L.K. Spencer-Chun, M.S.W.
President and CEO of Adult Friends for Youth

Chairs San Buenaventura and Takayama, Vice Chairs Nakamura and Gates, Members of the Committees:

I support HB2111 relating to Children and Family of Incarcerated Individuals. I am a member of the Family Reunification Working Group that started several years ago with the concerns of families affected by incarceration. I am grateful that in these years we have made some strides and HB2111 is the next step to helping families. I joined this group because in my capacity of President and CEO of Adult Friends for Youth we deal with many families affected by crime, violence and incarceration.

AFY's mission is "Redirecting lives to stop violence in order to strengthen family and community safety, while promoting well-being for all youth so that they can reach their full potential." In our capacity we have had the opportunity to serve some of the highest risk youth in our communities, whom are also some of the brightest young people we have ever met. The difference between them and others not at high-risk are their circumstances which include but not limited to: exposure to violence, drugs, incarcerated parents as well as siblings, living in distressed neighborhoods, less opportunities and in many cases lack of proper guidance and love.

We have also learned that many of our youth are angry and their anger stems from the lack of being in or having the control of their circumstances. I have heard youth share that they are angry with their parents for doing drugs or getting locked up but at the end of the day they love their parents and wish things were different. The visitation center proposed in HB2111 allows youth to deal with their anger and learn to rebuild a relationship that has been strained far too long between parent(s) and child.

Incarceration affects everyone in the family and the community at large. We need to take steps to begin the healing and promote a more PEARL community by promoting Peace, Empathy, Acceptance, Respect and Love. Thank you for your time.



Hawaii
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Representative San Buenaventura, Chair
Representative Nakamura, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

Representative Takayama, Chair
Representative Gates, Vice Chair
House Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs

Re: **HB 2111-relating to children and family incarcerated individuals**
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 329
9:45AM, 2/7/2020

Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Nakamura, Vice Chair Gates, and committee members,

On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), we are writing to support in STRONG support house bill 2111 Relating to Children and Family Incarcerated Individuals.

The lack of parental contact during incarceration is incredibly detrimental to the child and the family as a whole. It is a sad reality that collateral and misplaced punitive punishment falls on the children of incarcerated individuals. There is no reason a child should be denied a relationship with their parent simply because they are incarcerated.

Additionally, the lack of visitation is counterproductive to the supposed goal of incarceration. If the goal of incarceration is to rehabilitate individuals so that they do not end up incarcerated again, then it is integral to take into account the factors that play a role in recidivism. There is national data that finds incarcerated individuals are less likely to recidivate and more likely to have a successful re-entry into society when they can maintain contact with their loved ones. The family acts as an important support system for individuals coming out of correctional facilities. Creating visitation centers staffed by social service professionals, families will be provided the opportunity to receive information and referral and resource linkage services, guidance and counseling, and wrap-around services.

Hawai'i should invest in a Family Visitation Center, as proposed in the bill. We will be helping families sustain meaningful relationships through incarceration, and also save the state dollars in the future by reducing our prison population and welfare costs.

Thank you,

Kathleen Algire
Director, Public Policy and Research

TESTIMONY ON HB 2111 RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF INCARCERATED
INDIVIDUALS BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN SERVICES &
HOMELESSNESS AND PUBLIC SAFETY, VETERANS, & MILITARY AFFAIRS

February 7, 2020
9:45 pm
Conference Rm. 329

Representative San Buenaventura, Chair
Representative Nakamura, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

Representative Takayama, Chair
Representative Gates, Vice Chair
Committee on Public Safety, Veterans & Military Affairs

S. Kukunaokalā Yoshimoto
Program Specialist, Blueprint for Change
Family Reunification Working Group member
Holomua Pu‘uhonua member

STRONG Support for H.B. No. 2111, Relating to Children and Families of Incarcerated Individuals.

Blueprint for Change is a non-profit organization with a strong track record for innovating and implementing effective support services that address the unique challenges facing Hawai‘i’s ‘ohana. The organization’s roots date back to 1994 when in response to a growingly overburdened Child Welfare System, the Hawai‘i State Legislature created the Child Welfare Services Reform Task Force for the purpose of developing a “Blueprint for reform in child protective services.”

After several years of rigorous evaluation, the Committee finalized the core elements of the Neighborhood Place model, and in 2000, Blueprint for Change (BFC) was formed and incorporated as a nonprofit organization to serve as the Department of Human Services, master contractor for Neighborhood Place services and to continue the Committee’s effort to improve the responsiveness of the State of Hawai‘i – Child Welfare System.

By maintaining fluid relationships between state agencies, local service providers and community advocates, Blueprint for Change and the Neighborhood Place Partnership is able to significantly improve the responsiveness of the state’s Child Welfare System while reducing instances of child abuse and neglect.

As part of the oversight of the (7) NP across the state, BFC collects Quarterly Activity Reports (QAR), which is designed to inform services, procedures, and practices moving forward. In 2013 the QAR were showing a significant increase in services delivered to families impacted by incarceration. This led BFC to exploring this issue further. Thus, the creation of the Family Reunification Working Group (FRWG). The FRWG gained support and interest through the Legislative Keiki Caucus, and began meeting regularly to explore and advocate for solutions to problems encountered by children and families in the State who are affected by incarceration.

HB 2111 aims to do three things. First, it will continue the communication bond between an inmate and his children and family by providing a friendly visitation environment that will encourage families to visit

more often. Second, it will help break the generational cycle of incarceration by providing affected families with a lifeline, a resource center that can keep the family strong during the period of incarceration. The families left behind often struggle to sustain themselves financially and socially after the incarceration of one or more parents. Many are left without adequate health care and other supports and are plunged into a deadly spiral of despair and hopelessness.

Third, it will reduce the rate of recidivism by former inmates who have been given the opportunity to maintain bonds with their children and families. National studies have shown that recidivism rates of former inmates are reduced if they were able to maintain continuous communication with their children and families during the period of incarceration.

The following are reasons for STRONG SUPPORT OF H.B. No. 2111:

- Family friendly visitation centers will encourage families to stay in frequent contact with their significant others who are incarcerated;
- National data shows that incarcerated individuals who maintain regular contact with their children and families are less likely to recidivate when they reenter society;
- Having the visitation centers staffed by social service professionals will provide families with opportunities to receive information and referral and resource linkage services, guidance and counseling, wrap around services to address issues relating to poverty, etc;
- Visitation centers could also be staffed with kupuna and Hawaiian cultural practitioners who could provide Native Hawaiian families with more relevant cultural counseling and problem-solving practices;
- The bill provides all stakeholders with the opportunity to begin the conversation about how we break the cycle of incarceration and not only help families sustain themselves but also save the State millions of dollars in the future by reducing our prison population and welfare costs; and
- The State of California has successfully operated visitation centers like those being proposed by the bill for over thirty years. These centers are operated by a non-profit, social service organization called, Friends Outside.

Mahalo a nui loa for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Blueprint for Change is in STRONG SUPPORT of H.B. No. 2111



HB2111
RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED PARENTS
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
House Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs

February 7, 2020

9:45 a.m.

Room 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment will recommend that the Board of Trustees **COMMENT** on HB2111, which would establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at the Waiawa Correctional Facility.

Addressing the unique needs of children with incarcerated parents is of particular concern to the Native Hawaiian community. In 2010, OHA produced a comprehensive report detailing the overrepresentation and disparate treatment of Native Hawaiians in the criminal justice system. This report found that Native Hawaiians comprise 39 percent of the adult incarcerated population, while they account for just 24 percent of the general population.¹ Other OHA research has further demonstrated that Native Hawaiians are more likely to have children in their households than other state households.² Accordingly, given the disproportionate number of Native Hawaiians in the prison system, and the high likelihood that they may have children, there may be a significant number of Native Hawaiian children being immensely and negatively impacted by the incarceration of their parents.

OHA notes that a growing body of national research demonstrates that children whose parents are incarcerated may experience great trauma as a result of their parents' incarceration. For example, such children may struggle with challenges including separation from their families, displacement from their homes, social stigmas, emotional isolation, and a lack of financial and other resources. Consequently, children with incarcerated parents often suffer from emotional distress, developmental challenges, poor academic performance, aggressive behavior, and truancy. These children are three times more likely to suffer from depression or behavioral problems and twice as likely to suffer from learning disabilities and anxiety than the average American child.³ Moreover, in the

¹ THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, *THE DISPARATE TREATMENT OF NATIVE HAWAIIANS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM* 36 (2010), <https://19of32x2yl33s8o4xza0gf14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/native-hawaiians-criminal-justice-system.pdf>.

² THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS DATA BOOK, *Native Hawaiian Housing Data Table 2.05* (2019), http://www.ohadatabook.com/go_newtables.19.html.

³ Kristin Turney, *Stress Proliferation Across Generations? Examining the Relationship Between Parental Incarceration and Childhood Health*, 55 *JOURNAL OF HEALTH AND SOC. BEHAVIOR* 302 (2014).

long-term, these children may also be much more likely to enter the criminal justice system themselves.

A visitation center, such as that contemplated by this measure, that facilitates contact visits may be one means of mitigating the trauma felt by children with incarcerated parents, and reducing the harms of our criminal justice system on the Native Hawaiian community. Friendly and safe contact visits could provide comfort to children, by allowing them to see that their parents are safe and healthy while in prison.⁴ Parents and children spending time together in a welcoming and family-focused visitation center can also help mitigate children's feelings of abandonment and anxiety, while enabling them to strengthen or establish new bonds, and repair strained relationships. Notably, the maintenance of a parent-child relationship as facilitated by a visitation center can also contribute to the emotional stability of the incarcerated parent, contributing to their eventual rehabilitation. Accordingly, given that Native Hawaiians make up the largest percentage of the state prison population, the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center could serve to constructively address the harmful and long-term effects of disproportionate pa'ahao incarceration on Native Hawaiian children, families, and the Native Hawaiian community as a whole.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

⁴ THE EFFECTS OF PRISON VISITATION ON OFFENDER RECIDIVISM 1-2 https://mn.gov/doc/assets/11-11MNPrisonVisitationStudy_tcm1089-272781.pdf; Melinda Tasca et al., *Families Coming Together in Prison: An Examination of Visitation Encounters*, PUNISHMENT AND SOCIETY (2016).

HB-2111

Submitted on: 2/2/2020 3:18:42 PM

Testimony for HSH on 2/7/2020 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Steven Costa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2111

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 2:03:54 PM

Testimony for HSH on 2/7/2020 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carla Allison	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill from the Visitation Working Group that has been working together for a year. Visitation has a significant effect on recidivism. "Any visit reduced the risk of recidivism by 13 percent for felony reconvictions and 25 percent for technical violation revocations." Keeping families and loved ones connected is a good management strategy and creating a friendly space for visits that is filled with books and games is a good start in keeping loved ones connected

HB-2111

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 4:44:10 PM

Testimony for HSH on 2/7/2020 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
E. Ileina Funakoshi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

How wonderful to have a place without bars/glass/walls separating the visitors from their parents.

This resource center will benefit all concerned with emotional stability. Oh, what joy to hear laughter in their meetings,

HB-2111

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 10:13:39 AM

Testimony for HSH on 2/7/2020 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Barbara Barry	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2111

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 11:31:05 AM

Testimony for HSH on 2/7/2020 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sherry Alu Campagna	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a former foster mother, my foster children would often be left waiting in a DHS vehicle instead of visiting with their parent simply because there weren't enough visitation rooms or staff to ensure that an actual visit between parent and child happened. Because DHS made an attempt to have a visitation by taking the child from me and delivering that child to the parking lot of the facility where their parent was, that action would count as that family's monthly visitation. In reality, it was everything but a visitation. The trauma suffered by my foster children who had to wait in a car for an hour in a parking lot, sometimes knowing that their parent was nearby was awful. As a foster mother, it was my job to comfort them when they would return from these parking lot visits crying, hot, frustrated, tired, and heartbroken. I strongly urge the committee to create a Family Visitation Center to avoid these traumas to kids and those who love them.

HB-2111

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 10:00:22 PM

Testimony for HSH on 2/7/2020 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carrie Ann Shiota	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chairs and Members of the Committees:

I am writing in strong support of HB2111.

HB2111 requires the Department of Human Services to work with the Department of Public Safety to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility.

Many families in Hawai'i are impacted by incarceration. The problem of incarceration, divided families and visitation barriers disproportionately affects the poor, Native Hawaiians and other ethnic minorities.

Our ultimate goal should be to decrease the incarcerated population and downsize our jails and prisons while investing in community based policies and services that address poverty, substance abuse and mental health histories, lack of educational and employment opportunities.

In the meantime, we should enact policies that allow for safe and healthy visits with loved ones within our jails and prisons.

Why? Because research conclusively demonstrates that visitation has a significant effect on recidivism. If we want to decrease recidivism, then we should enact evidence based policies and practices that contributes to a reduction in recidivism rates.

Despite this knowledge, Hawai'i has many policies and practices within our jails and prisons that creates barriers to visitation. (One of the greatest barriers is exporting our incarcerated population to out-of-state private prisons as flights to Arizona, or other states on the American continent remain out of reach for the majority of families).

This bill would create a safe and nurturing space at Waiawa for family visitation that would be staffed by social workers. Eventually, these safe vistration spaces should be replicated at all jails and prisons to strengthen family connections.

Please pass HB2111.

Testimony of Bree Forbes in Support of H.B. 2111, Relating to Children and Family of Incarcerated Individuals

Aloha, my name is Bree Forbes and I am in support of H.B. 2111. My husband has been incarcerated for a little over a year and a half serving a statutory 20-year sentence. We have three young children ages 4, 6, and 8.

Through this unfortunate situation, there have been many hardships and stressors that have fallen upon me, now a single mother of three. The worst of it however is the impact it has had on our children. My husband had a wonderful relationship with our kids which is now essentially lost. The kids and I have participated in visitation at OCCC and Halawa, both which are no-contact facilities.

The conditions at OCCC are terrible- broken chairs, stuffy and cramped visitation cubicles, and guards who swear constantly with no regard for the children in the room. Scheduling can be a nightmare. There were days I called over 20 times and still was unable to get through. I could only bring one child at a time, which meant I had to find childcare for our other two kids. This also meant my kids only saw their dad about once a month, which is not nearly enough. Halawa was not as bad, guards were more respectful, however the visit room was hot and loud with all the people talking over one another. I could bring my youngest child with only one of my other kids, so I still needed childcare.

Visitation is tough on young children. There's no activities and no way too keep them entertained. To be honest I started to dread visitation because the kids had such a hard time. My husband was moved to Saguaro Correctional in Arizona late last year, and now we have no visitation. Although Saguaro does allow contact visits, I cannot afford to fly myself and my kids there to see him.

Children need physical contact, and positive means of interaction. Something as simple as a book or board game to play during visits. How can anyone expect a young child to sit still and converse with their incarcerated parent who is behind plexiglass? Just as I began to dread the visits, so did they. It's heartbreaking to watch as their bond with their father continues to deteriorate. He's becoming a stranger to them.

I love the idea of a resource center for families. Being someone who had no prior involvement or experience with the carceral system, it was not easy to navigate and to get answers. It took a lot of time, determination and research to get my questions answered. Many are not as fortunate as I am to have access to resources to help them get necessary information. It would have relieved a lot of stress and uncertainty and saved a lot of tears had a resource center been available for me and my family.

I'd like to thank you for hearing this measure, I think it's a positive first step in the right direction. I would love to see contact visitation restored in ALL of Hawaii's jails and prisons in a family-friendly environment that is clean, less intimidating, and supportive of family bonds. I respectfully ask that you think of all the children who have essentially lost a parent, who are confused and scared and please pass this measure.

TESTIMONY ON HB2111 RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF
INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN
SERVICES AND HOMELESSNESS, AND PUBLIC SAFETY, VETERANS, AND MILITARY
AFFAIRS

February 7, 2020
9:45 pm
Conference Rm. 329

Aloha Chairs San Buenaventura and Takayama, Vice Chairs Nakamura and Gates and members of the House Committees on Human Services and Homelessness, and Public Safety, Veterans, and Military Affairs, **my name is Lilinoe Kauahikaua, I am a Masters of Social Work Candidate at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, as well as an Intern with Blueprint For Change, and I am here today to support HB2111 Relating to Children and Families of Incarcerated Individuals.**

In my current study as a Master's of Social work Candidate, I have focused primarily on the over-representation of Native Hawaiians in the criminal justice system, in our jails and prisons here in Hawai'i, and those held in out of state facilities. I am called to this work because of my own experiences with incarceration, substance abuse, and homelessness.

I want to take a moment to share a personal experience of my encounter with a family resource and visitation center similar to the one proposed. I do not have any children, but there was one point in my life when I thought that might change. Back in the early 2000s, My fiance at the time had two amazing children whom I love deeply. In around 2004 or so, he was sentenced to prison for 1 year, which turned into 2, as is often the case. He served time at several of California's state prisons. During that time, his ex-wife filed for sole custody of his two minor children. She refused to tell the children that he was incarcerated; they had no idea why their father was suddenly absent. She denied his children to visit the facilities. She refused to give the children any mail with the facility address on it and declined his calls. He was allowed no access to his children, had defaulted on child support, and was financially unable to do anything about any of it.

He was housed in one of California's State prisons. Shortly after his arrival at the long term facility, an organization called Friends Outside contacted me. They provided services aimed at preserving familial bonds between the children and their incarcerated parents. Every so often, they would call to update me on upcoming family court proceedings. They connected me with resources on how to address child support and resources available in our area to address many of the other issues that had contributed to his incarceration. Friends Outside helped my ex to create an audio recording of himself reading a book to his kids. The tapes were then sent to his children through the aid of their Friends Outside network. Through the help and guidance of this organization, he was able to open communication with his children and maintain their relationship.

HB2111 would be modeled on the success of Friends Outside and other similar programs across the country while continuing to address the unique cultural needs of our diverse population. With disproportionate numbers of our Native community incarcerated, a resource center staffed with cultural

practitioners and social workers would provide Native Hawaiian families with access to more resonant models of cultural healing.

A staff of community social workers would allow community-based social services to develop comprehensive interventions and wrap-around services for families of incarcerated individuals. Being staffed with community social workers would serve to bridge the gap between services in the facility and services in the community. Families would have the opportunity to be assessed and connected with relevant resources to help families cope with the loss of a parent to incarceration, the loss of income, and the loss of stability in the family.

HB2111 would allow families to receive education on productive and healthy means of communication during in-person and phone visitation. National data shows that incarcerated individuals who maintain regular contact with their children and families are less likely to recidivate when they reenter society.

The event of visitation day is often stressful for a family. Therefore having a family-friendly visitation center could offer to familiarize families with prison rules and practices to alleviate some stresses and encourage more frequent visitation.

HB2111 would also create more conducive visitation conditions for families with minor children so as not to compound trauma already experienced as a result of the incarcerated parent's environment.

I strongly support HB2111. Mahalo for allowing me to share this testimony with the committee.

HB-2111

Submitted on: 2/6/2020 9:15:10 AM

Testimony for HSH on 2/7/2020 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kristine Crawford	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Visitation reduces recidivism.

Aloha Chairs San Buenaventura and Takayam, Vice Chairs Gates and Nakamura and members of the committee,

I write to ask that you support HB 2111.

Kaui Pratt Aquino

Kaneohe

Hawaii

LATE

Aloha Kakou,

My name is June Toguchi-Tassill, and I support HB 2111 Relating to Children of Incarcerated Individuals.

Members, I am the widow of Uncle Joe Tassill who many of you know was a strong advocate for keeping families bonded as much as possible to an incarcerated parent, particularly the relationship between children and the parent.

He firmly believed in second chances and that we shouldn't punish and leave families torn and broken because of the mistakes of their loved ones.

He believed that children shouldn't have to pay for the sins of their fathers or mothers. That they deserved a chance to grow healthy and productive and not follow the path of their parents that lead to incarceration.

Finally, he believed that if we made safe places, pu`uhonua, for the children to bond with their incarcerated parent, even for short times, it would help the parent become a person of worth again.

Mahalo for your support for this bill.