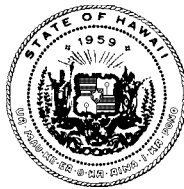


DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT  
DIRECTOR

CATHY BETTS  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

March 10, 2020

TO: The Honorable Representative Joy A. 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: **SB 2345 SD1 – RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED  
INDIVIDUALS**

Hearing: March 13, 2020, 9:45 a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

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

**PURPOSE:** 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. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

The Senate Committee on Ways and Means changed the appropriation to an unspecified amount, defected the effective date, and made technical amendments.

House Committees on Human Services & Homelessness and Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs, made similar amendments to the House companion measure HB 2111.

Improving contacts and relationships between children and families with their incarcerated parents at the Waiawa facility will benefit multiple generations. These 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.

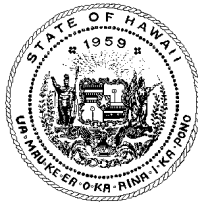
DHS is committed to a multigenerational approach to end poverty in Hawaii, and it is well known that growing up with an incarcerated parent is an adverse early childhood experience that has long lasting impact on children into adulthood. DHS will work with family members, community stakeholders, members and staff of the Legislature, 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 to reduce the impact of incarceration on Hawaii's children and families, especially native Hawaiian families who are overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

OYS recently submitted a 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. The grant proposal, like this measure, aims to reduce the impact of incarceration on children by enhancing available programs and services.

It will take sustained 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 SENATE BILL 2345, SENATE DRAFT 1  
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, Co-Chair

Friday, March 13, 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 Senate Bill (SB) 2345, Senate Draft (SD) 1, 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 SB 2345, SD 1  
House Committee on Human Services  
and Homelessness  
House Committee on Public Safety,  
Veterans, and Military Affairs  
March 13, 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 can 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 HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
**OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES**  
1010 Richards Street, Suite 314  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

March 11, 2020

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

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

FROM: Merton Chinen, Executive Director

**SUBJECT: SB 2345 SD 1, RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED  
INDIVIDUALS**

Hearing: Friday, March 13, 2020, 9:45 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

**OFFICE'S POSITION:** Office of Youth Services (OYS) supports this measure. 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, has applied 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.



**SB2345 SD1**  
**RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED PARENTS**  
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness  
House Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs

March 13, 2020

9:45 a.m.

Room 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers the following **COMMENTS** on SB2345 SD1, 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. Recently published data indicate that Native Hawaiians comprise 37 percent of the adult incarcerated population, while they account for just 18 percent of the general population.<sup>1</sup> Other OHA research has further demonstrated that Native Hawaiians are more likely to have children in their households than other state households.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, in the long-term, these children may also be much more likely to enter the criminal justice system themselves.

---

<sup>1</sup> HCR 85 TASK FORCE, SUMMARY & KEY RECOMMENDATIONS 2 (2019), available at <https://19of32x2yl33s8o4xza0gf14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/HCR85-web.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS DATA BOOK, Native Hawaiian Housing Data Table 2.05 (2019), [http://www.ohadatabook.com/go\\_newtables.19.html](http://www.ohadatabook.com/go_newtables.19.html).

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

A visitation center 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.<sup>4</sup> 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, since Native Hawaiians make up the largest percentage of the state prison population, the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center would 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 piha for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

---

<sup>4</sup> THE EFFECTS OF PRISON VISITATION ON OFFENDER RECIDIVISM 1-2 [https://mn.gov/doc/assets/11-11MNPrisonVisitationStudy\\_tcm1089-272781.pdf](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).



# Adult Friends for Youth

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*

## Testimony on SB2345, SD1 Relating to Children and Family of Incarcerated Individuals

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 and Members of the Committees:

I support SB2345, SD1 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 SB2345, SD1 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 SB2345, SD1 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



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

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

Date: March 13, 2020 at 9:45am Room 329

RE: **Support for SB 2345 SD 1; Relating to Children and Family of Incarcerated Individuals**

The Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide public-private collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners are working to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki. ECAS supports SB 2345 SD 1, which would establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa Correctional Facility.

There is a growing body of national research demonstrating the detrimental impacts parental incarceration may have on their keiki. Parental incarceration is noted as being a strong risk factor for many adverse outcomes for keiki, including antisocial and violent behavior, mental health problems, poor academic performance, and higher rates of unemployment<sup>1</sup>. In Hawai'i, we know from data collected by the Department of Public Safety that there are approximately 4,000 children a year affected by parental incarceration. In an analysis of 2007 national prisoner data, 22% of children with parents in state prison and 16% of children with parents in federal prison were four years old or younger—many experiencing parental incarceration while in the process of forming primary attachments.

Although majority of imprisoned parents have some contact with their child during incarceration, the quality of visits are impacted by the prison environment<sup>2</sup>. The prison environment can be be frightening for keiki who are subjected to long waits, body frisks, and exposure to crowded visiting rooms with no developmentally appropriate activities. Moreover, several studies have documented parents' concerns about having their children visit them in prison or jail. In one study, majority of jailed parents

---

<sup>1</sup> Kristin Turney, Stress Proliferation Across Generations? Examining the Relationship Between Parental Incarceration and Childhood Health, 55 JOURNAL OF HEALTH AND SOC. BEHAVIOR 302 (2014).

<sup>2</sup> Dallaire DH, Wilson LC, Ciccone A. Representations of attachment relationships in family drawings of children with incarcerated parents; Denver, CO. Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development. Apr, 2009.

interviewed did not wish for a visit from their children because of concerns regarding transportation costs, visitation and security conditions, and worries that the visit would be emotionally upsetting for the child.<sup>3</sup> Passage of this bill would provide Waiawa Correctional Facility funds to improve its visitation space, making them more child-friendly and conducive for keiki to engage in quality visits with their incarcerated parent.

Many studies also demonstrate quality and positive visitation interactions happen in settings with interventions<sup>4</sup> (e.g. visitation programs, prison nursery intervention). This bill would also establish a family resource component during visitation linking social service professionals to families to provide information and referral services and guidance and counseling. It is critical to ensure professionals can support families during the visitation process.

For these reasons, we recommend appropriating funds to improve the Waiawa Correctional Facility Visitation space as well as to support the establishment of the family resource center. SB 2345 SD 1 would help keiki and families impacted by incarceration and we respectfully urge the Committee to support its passage. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

---

<sup>3</sup> Hairston CF. Mothers in jail: Parent-child separation and jail visitation. *Affilia*. 1991;6:9–27.

<sup>4</sup> Booker Loper A, Dallaire D, Poehlmann J, Shear LD. Children's Contact with Their Incarcerated Parents: Research Findings and Recommendations, *Am Psychol*. 2010 Sep; 65(6): 575-598.

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / [kat.caphi@gmail.com](mailto: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, March 13, 2020

9:45 am – Room 329

### **STRONG SUPPORT for SB 2345 – FAMILY VISITATION/RESOURCE CTR. at WAIAWA CF**

Aloha Chairs San Buenaventura and Takayama and Members of the Committees!

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 **JAMES BORLING SALAS, 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 eleven (11) people that we know of, who have died in the last six (6) months. We also remind the committee of 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.

Community Alliance on Prisons strongly supports this bill and we hope the \$150,000 appropriation to PSD to create a safe and healthy environment for a family visitation and resource center is appropriated for this purpose.

Community Alliance on Prisons is part of the working group established by the legislature in HCR 205 (2019). The department of human services has convened the meetings and has been wonderful in seeking input from everyone, keeping notes, and putting together the report<sup>1</sup> 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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*<sup>2</sup>:

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) Shlafer, 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 committee to be part of this transformation that brings family and community together and to enthusiastically support this measure.

Please pass this bill with a strong recommendation for the \$150,000 appropriation (the figure that Warden Ornellas and the Department of Public Safety have said they need) to create a visitation/resource center to enhance visitation and to help strengthen families by creating opportunities for families to connect.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

---

<sup>2</sup> 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>

TESTIMONY ON SB 2345, SD 1 RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF  
INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN  
SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS AND PUBLIC SAFETY, VETERANS, & MILITARY  
AFFAIRS

March 13, 2020  
9:45 am  
Conference Rm. 329

Aloha Chairs San Buenaventura and Takayama, Vice-Chairs Nakamura and Gates and members of the House Committees on Human Services & Homelessness and Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs, **my name is Stephen Morse. I am the Executive Director of Blueprint for Change (BFC) and am here today to support SB 2345 Relating to Children and Families of Incarcerated Individuals.**

Members, for the record, BFC is the fiscal, technical, and administrative support entity for seven Neighborhood Place centers statewide that provide support and strengthening services to families at risk of child abuse and neglect under two POS contracts with the Department of Human Services. Historically, our work has focused on traditional risk factors for child abuse, including homelessness or unstable housing, unemployment and low incomes, substance abuse, chronic health problems, and physical disabilities. However, in 2014, after much research and analysis, BFC determined that one of the most severe risk factors for child neglect in the families we serve is that there is at least one parent who is incarcerated.

An estimated 2.7 million children nationwide have at least one parent that is incarcerated, and studies conducted by the National Fatherhood Initiative show that in terms of negative impacts on children, incarceration may be worse than the death of a parent or the divorce of parents. Even more disheartening is the evidence that children of incarcerated parents are more likely to become incarcerated themselves as teenagers or adults, thus continuing the “cycle of incarceration” that sadly becomes generational in some families.

We know from data that has been collected by the Department of Public Safety since 2015 that over 3,000 minor children (under the age of 18) a year are affected by parental incarceration, and these are children of parents who are just entering the intake system during the year. It doesn't include parents that have been in the prison system longer than a year. Furthermore, the UH Center on the Family did a study that estimated there were approximately 15,000 children affected by parental incarceration in 2015.

SB 2345 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.

Passage of the bill will provide Waiawa Correctional Facility with funds to improve its visitation spaces to make them friendly and allow for more bonding activities between inmates and their children. It will also provide funding to establish a family resource component during visitation where social service professionals can provide families with information and referral, resource linkage services, guidance and counseling. These visits with the families can also extend to home visitation and wrap around services that will help the families address risk factors in the home such as, very low incomes, unstable housing, substance and alcohol abuse, physical and mental disorders, among others. These services will also play a large part in preparing the families for the eventual return home of their incarcerated loved ones.

From time to time, the resource component at visitation may also be staffed with kupuna and Hawaiian cultural practitioners who could provide Native Hawaiian families with more relevant cultural counseling and problem-solving practices.

Other States have funded similar initiatives. The State of Maryland already does this with a program called, "Reentry Mediation." 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 for allowing us to share this testimony with the Committees.

**SB-2345-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2020 8:12:56 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2020 9:45:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Victor K. Ramos     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Incarcerated parents, whoes lives have changed because of it, have good to offer their children. And, children need to see, hug and hear their parents.

**SB-2345-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2020 7:51:47 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2020 9:45:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mike Golojuch, Sr.  | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

I support SB2345. Please pass. Thank you.

Mike Golojuch, Sr.

Secretary/Board Member, Rainbow Family 808



TESTIMONY ON SB2345 SD 1 RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF  
INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES &  
HOMELESSNESS, AND THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, VETERANS, &  
MILITARY AFFAIRS

March 13, 2020  
9:45 am  
Conference Rm. 329

Aloha Chairs Dela Cruz and Takayama, Vice-Chairs Agaran and Gates, and members of the House Human Services & Homelessness Committee and members of the House Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee, **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 SB2345 SD 1 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.

SB2345 SD 1 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.

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.

SB2345 SD 1 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 would familiarize families with prison rules and practices to alleviate some stresses and encourage more frequent visitation.

SB2345 SD 1 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.

**However, I do disagree with the amendment and removal of the appropriation.** The appropriation would provide Waiawa Correctional Facility with funds to improve its visitation spaces to make them friendly and allow for more bonding activities between inmates and their children. **We are proposing that \$150,000 be appropriated to the Department of Public Safety to allow it to make these improvements.**

**We are also proposing that another \$150,000 be appropriated to the Department of Human Services for the purpose of establishing a family resource component during visitation where social service professionals can provide families with information and referral, resource linkage services, guidance, and counseling.** These visits with the families can also extend to home visitation and wrap-around services that will help the families address risk factors in the home such as, very low incomes, unstable housing, substance and alcohol abuse, physical and mental disorders, among others. These services will also play a large part in preparing the families for the eventual return home of their incarcerated loved ones.

I strongly support SB2345 SD 1 with the addition of an added appropriation. Mahalo for allowing me to share this testimony with the committee.



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.*

March 13, 2020

To: Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Rep. Nadine K. Nakamura, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

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

**LATE**

Re: **SB 2345 SD1- Relating to Children and Family Incarcerated Individuals.**  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 329  
9:45 am, 3/12/2020

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

**On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks! (HCAN Speaks!), we are writing in strong support of SB2345 SD1, 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



**LATE**

Committees: Committee on Human Services and Homelessness  
Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, and Military Affairs  
Hearing Date/Time: Friday, March 13, 2020, 9:45 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 329  
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in Support of S.B. 2345 S.D. 1

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

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i writes in **support** of S.B. 2345 S.D. 1, 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.

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. Research shows that visits and maintaining family ties are among the best ways to reduce recidivism<sup>1</sup>. Reducing Hawaii's incarceration numbers will ultimately save the state money.

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 S.B. 2345 S.D. 1.

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.*

---

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

**LATE**

**SB-2345-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 5:49:06 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2020 9:45:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| colleen             | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: