

HB-1779

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 9:03:41 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/4/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nikos Leverenz	Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center	Support	No

Comments:

Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center supports HB 1779.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS
Honorable Representative Takashi Ono, Chair
Honorable Sonny Ganaden, Vice Chair

HEARING DATE: Friday, February 4, 2022
TIME: 10:00 PM, Via Videoconference

SUPPORT FOR HB1779 RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

The Women's Prison Project strongly supports this measure appropriating \$250,000 to continue the second year of a pilot program for higher and continuing education at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC). The first year was funded with a [2021 GEER grant](#). The program is a collaborative effort between Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ), the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), Windward Community College (WCC), College of Social Sciences University of Hawai'i (UH) and McKinley Community School for Adults (MCSA).

"As Horace Mann once said, education is 'the great equalizer,' but this only works if the most vulnerable individuals have access to it" ([Bender, 2018](#)). Incarcerated people in Hawai'i read at an average 5th-6th grade level [according to the state](#) and our experience working at WCCC shows many average less especially in math. Almost 60% of the women at WCCC are high school dropouts. These numbers alone show we suffer from systemic problems that begin with school failures, using "zero tolerance" for school discipline resulting in [the school to prison pipeline](#).

This results in the first six months of this innovative education program shows its remarkable value for helping women continue their educations. The program trains imprisoned women who have at least a high school education to become tutors for their peers studying for the GED. Since the program began in earnest in November 2021, five women completed a 20 hour training program in cooperative education, which taught them how to engage students in hands on learning. They were hired as tutors and financial incentives are also offered for women to complete the GED. To study for the GED with a poor academic history is especially challenging. The women studying for the GED in this program had grade levels assessed before they began at only 4th

and 5th grades, but with the encouragement of their tutors they began to see themselves as capable of passing the test. About 30 women enrolled in the program who worked for innumerable hours studying for the test (one dropped out for personal reasons). While the incentives helped get the women into the classroom to begin studying, it was the tutors hands on, and consistently applied assistance that helped the women learn the material to pass the GED.

The success of the program to date far exceeds its initial expectations. Despite WCCC's average rate of GED passage since 2016 of only three women a year, nine (9) women have passed the GED as of January 2022 in this program. A new cohort of tutors will be trained from the group who recently passed the GED in the program.

Higher education is also supported by this program including providing college correspondence courses for women who have high school educations or passed the GED.

Research has shown that higher and continuing [education reduces repeat crime](#), and an academic paper on the program has already been accepted for publication later this year in a book about cooperative and peace education. We can share the draft with you of this paper if you are interested.

We must provide education for those in our correctional institutions who literally fell through the cracks in our education system. We urge the Committee to please pass this bill. If you have any questions about HFRJ's support please contact Lorenn Walker, JD, MPH, at lorenn@hawaii.edu or (808) 218-3712. Mahalo for your public service.



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COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS
Honorable Representative Takashi Ono, Chair
Honorable Sonny Ganaden, Vice Chair

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HB-1779

Submitted on: 2/3/2022 7:28:22 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/4/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kat Brady	Community Alliance on Prisons	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha!

Community Alliance on Prisons is in strong support of this great program that trains women as general education tutors for their peers. What a fabulous idea! Women helping women has always been a successful strategy.

It builds community, fosters relationship building, and helps women with basic skills needed to navigate the world.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
1177 Alakea Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

MAX N. OTANI
DIRECTOR

Maria C. Cook
Deputy Director
Administration

Tommy Johnson
Deputy Director
Corrections

Jordan Lowe
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1779
RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN.

by
Max N. Otani, Director
Department of Public Safety

House Committee on Corrections, Military, & Veterans
Representative Takashi Ohno, Chair
Representative Sonny Ganaden, Vice Chair

Friday, February 4, 2022, 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Via Video Conference

Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Ganaden, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) has reviewed House Bill (HB) 1779, which seeks to appropriate funds for the 2nd year of a pilot program to train incarcerated women to be general education development tutors for their peers and provide college correspondence courses for inmates at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC).

The Department supports the intent of this measure and respectfully offers comments on the first year of this pilot program. During the first year of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief grant (GEER), provided through the Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice, a total of five (5) G.E.D. tutors were successfully trained and certified. As of January 2022, a total of nine (9) women at WCCC earned their G.E.D. diplomas and of the nine graduates, six (6) went on to enroll in post-secondary programs earning college credits.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony supporting the intent of HB 1779.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY, & VETERANS
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1779

February 4, 2022
10:00 a.m.
Room 430 and Videoconference

RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1779 appropriates \$250,000 in general funds as second-year funding to the Department of Public Safety (PSD) for FY 23 for the education program for imprisoned women, a program to train incarcerated women to be general education development tutors for their peers, provide college correspondence courses for women in the Women's Community Correctional Center, and provide reentry and transition services for women who wish to continue their education post incarceration. The bill also indicates that PSD may transfer the appropriated funds to the University of Hawaii or the Department of Education or award a grant to a private entity to achieve the intended purposes of the bill.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

HB-1779

Submitted on: 2/3/2022 11:04:43 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/4/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ann S Freed	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members,

Strong support for this measure. Another step in the direction of effective compliance with The 2006 Hawaii State Legislature mandated through Hawaii Revised Statutes §367D-2 that the Department of Public Safety (PSD) foster a gender responsive environment by providing model gender-responsive programs for female offenders that are responsive to statewide needs.

Reduction of recidivism, not institutionalization benefits everyone, including the tax payer.

Mahalo,

Ann S. Freed

Life-time Feminist in Mililani