
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO INCARCERATED PARENTS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that during the 1990s,
2 the number of incarcerated parents in the United States grew by
3 approximately fifty-nine per cent. The legislature further
4 finds that currently there is no means of determining the exact
5 number of incarcerated individuals with minor children in Hawaii
6 as no procedure is in place for collecting such data. However,
7 it is estimated that there are approximately three thousand, one
8 hundred and sixty-three parents of six thousand, six hundred and
9 sixty-five children in Hawaii's prison system. An increased
10 focus needs to be placed on the children of incarcerated
11 individuals in order to maintain the parent-child bond.

12 Studies indicate that the children of incarcerated
13 individuals suffer from a multitude of negative consequences,
14 including possible displacement from their home and separation
15 from their primary or secondary caregiver. As a result, these
16 children experience strong emotional reactions to the
17 incarceration and disruption in their home life, leading to a
18 significant increase, up to six times more likely, of becoming



1 involved in the criminal justice system themselves. State
2 policies contribute to the breakdown of the family by failing to
3 facilitate the continued relationship between incarcerated
4 individuals and their children, when the relationship is in the
5 best interest of the child. Denial of visitation is a means of
6 punishment or discipline of the incarcerated individuals, but
7 those who truly suffer are the children. However, strengthening
8 family relationships has a positive effect on preventing
9 recidivism as studies have shown it can lessen the possibility
10 of future incarceration after an inmate's release from a
11 correctional facility. Studies have also shown that therapeutic
12 involvement with families during incarceration builds better and
13 stronger relationships between the incarcerated parent's
14 children and the incarcerated parent once the parent is
15 released.

16 A successful model has already been developed and
17 implemented in the State. The supporting keiki of incarcerated
18 parents (SKIP) project aims to strengthen families, decrease
19 abuse and neglect of children of incarcerated parents, and
20 decrease the occurrence of repeat incarceration. The SKIP
21 program works with incarcerated fathers at Waiawa correctional
22 facility, and has been a model for projects in correctional



1 facilities for both men and women inmates, such as No Na Kamalii
2 and Ohana Strengthening at the Maui community correctional
3 center and for Makua Keiki at the Kauai community correctional
4 center. A partnership is also currently underway to replicate
5 the program in the Hawaii community correctional center. All of
6 the related SKIP programs have formed a coalition known as the
7 SKIP Partnership. In addition to an educational playgroup, the
8 program also enrolls inmate parents in parenting programs such
9 as Kamalama classes based on traditional Hawaiian values, and
10 the First Teachers Nurturing Fathers program which helps them to
11 nurture themselves and others and to develop good parenting
12 skills. The combination of education, play and learn groups,
13 and support groups is aimed at increasing an incarcerated
14 parent's ability to provide a safe and nurturing environment for
15 young children.

16 Therefore, the legislature determines that the State should
17 take an active role in aiding these families through the
18 provision of parent-child interaction programs such as the SKIP
19 program, to ensure that these children can build and maintain
20 strong relationships with incarcerated parents and grow into
21 well-adjusted, contributing members of the community, breaking



1 generational cycles of abuse, neglect, violence, and crime that
2 lead to incarceration.

3 The purpose of this Act is to support the expansion of
4 parent-child interaction programs such as the SKIP program, at
5 other state correctional facilities to facilitate appropriate
6 child visitation of incarcerated parents.

7 SECTION 2. **Parent-child interaction.** (a) Within the
8 department of public safety, programs, such as the supporting
9 keiki of incarcerated parents program, shall be developed for
10 and implemented in both male and female state correctional
11 facilities. Funding provided by this Act shall be used for:

12 (1) The development and implementation of parent-child
13 interaction programs that meet security requirements,
14 such as the supporting keiki of incarcerated parents
15 program, throughout the state correctional system,
16 including:

17 (A) Training of public safety personnel on the merits
18 of the program; and

19 (B) Hiring of additional public safety personnel to
20 facilitate the implementation of the programs.

21 (2) The collection of accurate demographic data on the
22 children of incarcerated parents, including the number



1 of children each incarcerated parent has, the
2 children's ages, resident addresses and schools,
3 custody and caregiving arrangements, and necessary
4 services; and

5 (3) An independent review of the programs using
6 researchers such as the University of Hawaii at Manoa
7 public policy center.

8 (b) The department of public safety shall submit the
9 independent review, including any recommendations and proposed
10 legislation to the legislature no later than twenty days prior
11 to the convening of the 2009 regular session.

12 (c) The department of public safety shall contract with
13 nonprofit health and human service agencies, communities of
14 faith, and other relevant agencies or organizations to establish
15 and implement parent-child interaction programs under this Act.

16 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
18 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2007-2008 and
19 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
20 year 2008-2009 for parent-child interaction programs at state
21 correctional facilities.



1 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
2 of public safety for the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2007.
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INTRODUCED BY:

<u>Maria N.</u>	<u>Maribeth B. Lee</u>
<u>Della C. Belatti</u>	<u>Raymond Hansen</u>
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>Barbara Mamm</u>
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>Cynthia Hicken</u>
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>Tom Brown</u>
<u>Rick Cubanillo</u>	<u>John M. Myers</u>
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>Karl Wood</u>
<u>Karen Awana</u>	<u>Jerry Wherry</u>
	<u>Fyla B. Berg</u>
	<u>Nikki Inqui</u>
	<u>Sharon & Steve</u>
	<u>Colleen Muff</u>
	<u>Cindy Evans</u>
	<u>Melie Carroll</u>
	<u>[Signature]</u>

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Report Title:

Parent-child Interaction; Incarcerated Parents

Description:

Appropriates funds for the expansion of parent-child interaction programs such as the Strengthening Keiki of Incarcerated Parents project (SKIP) at State correctional facilities.

