
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 3,163 parents of
8 6,665 children in Hawaii's prison system.

9 An increased focus needs to be placed on the children of
10 incarcerated individuals to maintain a parent-child bond.
11 Studies indicate that the children of incarcerated individuals
12 suffer from a multitude of negative consequences, including
13 possible displacement from their home and separation from their
14 primary or secondary caregiver. As a result, these children
15 experience strong emotional reactions to the incarceration and
16 disruption in their home life, leading to a significant



1 increase, up to six times more likely, of becoming involved in
2 the criminal justice system themselves.

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

17 A successful model already has been developed and
18 implemented in the State: the Strengthening Keiki of
19 Incarcerated Parents (SKIP) Project aims to strengthen families,
20 decrease abuse and neglect of children of incarcerated parents,
21 and decrease the occurrence of repeat incarceration. The SKIP
22 program works with incarcerated fathers at Waiawa correctional



1 facility, and has been a model for projects in correctional
2 facilities for both male and female inmates such as No Na
3 Kamalii and `Ohana Strengthening at the Maui community
4 correctional center and Makua Keiki at the Kauai community
5 correctional center. A partnership is currently underway to
6 replicate the program in the Hawaii community correctional
7 center, as well. All of the related SKIP programs have formed a
8 coalition known as the SKIP Partnership.

9 In addition to an educational playgroup, the program also
10 enrolls the incarcerated parents in parenting programs, such
11 Nurturing Fathers and Supporting Parents as First Teachers, to
12 help them reflect and heal from their neglectful and abusive
13 childhoods, begin to learn how to nurture themselves and others,
14 and to develop good parenting skills. The combination of
15 education, play and learn groups, and support groups is aimed to
16 increase an incarcerated parent's ability to provide a safe and
17 nurturing environment for young children.

18 The legislature determines that the State should take an
19 active role in aiding these families through the provision of
20 incarcerated parent-child interaction programs, such as the SKIP
21 program, to ensure that these children can build and maintain



1 strong relationships with their incarcerated parents and grow
2 into well-adjusted, contributing members of the community.

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

8 SECTION 2. **Incarcerated parent-child interaction programs.**

9 (a) Within the department of public safety, incarcerated
10 parent-child interaction programs, such as the SKIP program,
11 shall be developed for both male and female state correctional
12 facilities. Funding shall be used for:

13 (1) The development and implementation of incarcerated
14 parent-child interaction programs that meet security
15 requirements, such as the SKIP program, throughout the
16 state correctional system;

17 (2) The collection of accurate demographic data on the
18 children of incarcerated parents, including the number
19 of children each incarcerated parent has; the
20 children's ages, resident addresses, and schools;
21 custody and caregiving arrangements; and needed
22 services; and



1 (3) An independent review of the programs using
2 researchers such as the University of Hawaii at Mānoa,
3 public policy center.

4 (b) Funding may also be used for:

5 (1) The training of public safety personnel on the merits
6 of the programs; and

7 (2) The hiring of additional public safety personnel to
8 facilitate the implementation of the programs.

9 (c) The independent reviewer contracted by the director of
10 public safety shall submit a report, including its findings,
11 recommendations, and any proposed legislation, to the
12 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
13 the 2008 regular session.

14 (d) The department of public safety shall take steps to
15 implement incarcerated parent-child interaction programs such as
16 the SKIP program. The department shall contract with nonprofit
17 health and human service agencies, communities of faith, and
18 other relevant agencies or organizations to develop and
19 implement the recommended programs or services. The contract
20 shall be executed in accordance with chapter 103F, Hawaii
21 Revised Statutes.



1 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
 2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$, or so
 3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2007-2008, and
 4 the same sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
 5 year 2008-2009, for incarcerated parent-child interaction
 6 programs at state correctional facilities.

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

9 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2007.

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Report Title:

Incarcerated Parents

Description:

Appropriates funds for the expansion of incarcerated parent-child interaction programs, such as the Strengthening Keiki of Incarcerated Parents Project, at state correctional facilities.

