



LATE TESTIMONY

SCR90
RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

March 31, 2015

1:15 p.m.

Room 229

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Administration will recommend that the Board of Trustees **SUPPORT** SCR90. SCR90 will encourage the Department of Public Safety to further expand its effective community placement programs in order to more efficiently balance its resources and ensure more successful rehabilitation and community reintegration of female ex-offenders.

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 This disparity is even greater for women as Native Hawaiian women comprise 44 percent of the female adult incarcerated population but just 19.8 percent of the general population of women in Hawai'i.² Moreover, Native Hawaiians bear a disproportionate burden of the punitive responses to drug use as they are charged with the majority of offenses related to methamphetamines (which account for the most charges of all drug offenses) and make up the largest portion of offenders incarcerated for drug offenses.³

The Native Hawaiian Criminal Justice Task Force (NHJTF) report recommends that community-based substance abuse and mental health treatment should be developed and fully utilized where possible, to better support incarcerated populations and save the state resources.⁴ The NHJTF noted in its 2012 report that much of the community testimony presented during its meetings across Ka Pae 'Āina Hawai'i were related to the challenges of reintegration for many Native Hawaiians.⁵ For many, successful reentry is thwarted by barriers to securing employment and housing due to their arrest and conviction records as well as alienation from their families, particularly their children. Much of the testimony reaffirmed that assisting with reintegration should be a primary kuleana of the

¹ THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, THE DISPARATE TREATMENT OF NATIVE HAWAIIANS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM 36 (2010), http://www.oha.org/sites/default/files/ir_final_web_rev.pdf

² *Id.* at 11.

³ However, it should be noted that Native Hawaiians do not use drugs at drastically different rates from other races or ethnicities and report only marginally higher rates of methamphetamine use than people of other races or ethnicities. *Id.* at 12.

⁴ 2012 NATIVE HAWAIIAN JUSTICE TASK FORCE REP. sec. G, at 29-30.

⁵ 2012 NATIVE HAWAIIAN JUSTICE TASK FORCE REP. sec.A, at 27, sec. C, at 28, <http://www.oha.org/nativehawaiianjusticetaskforce>.

community.⁶ It also reaffirmed that many local community-based substance abuse treatment and reintegration programs have demonstrated substantial success in rehabilitating offenders and reducing recidivism. Further, OHA's research shows that community-based drug treatment can reduce recidivism by 17 percent, whereas drug treatment in jail reduces the chance of recidivism by a mere 5 percent.⁷

If passed, SCR90 would recognize these findings and encourage the Department of Public Safety to expand its community placement programs, more efficiently balance its resources, and more successfully rehabilitate and reintegrate female offenders.

Therefore, we respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** SCR90. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

⁶ *Id.* at 39.

⁷ THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, THE DISPARATE TREATMENT OF NATIVE HAWAIIANS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM at 48.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
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SCR90

Submitted on: 3/30/2015
Testimony for PSM on Mar 31, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Pamela Lichty	Drug Policy Action Group	Support	No

Comments: Community placement services have proven their value over the years for women transitioning out of prisons. We strongly support their continuation and expansion.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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