

#### HB998 RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY House Committee on Public Safety

February 5, 2015 9:00 a.m. Room 309

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment will recommend to the OHA Board of Trustees a position of <u>SUPPORT WITH</u> <u>AMENDMENTS</u> for HB998. OHA collaborated with community groups and interested stakeholders to proffer a very similar version of this bill, which takes a long-awaited first step towards identifying and addressing the unique needs of Hawai'i's keiki with incarcerated parents, by requiring the Department of Public Safety to collect intake data relating to the children of prisoners.

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 face 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>1</sup> Moreover, in the long-term, these children may also be much more likely to enter the criminal justice system themselves.

Addressing the unique needs of children with incarcerated parents is of particular concern to the Native Hawaiian community. 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.<sup>2</sup> Native Hawaiians are also more likely to have children in their households than other state households.<sup>3</sup> Such data strongly indicate that Native Hawaiian children may be most greatly impacted by parental incarceration; therefore, understanding and addressing the needs of this very vulnerable population is a key concern within the

<sup>1</sup> Kristin Turney, *Stress Proliferation Across Generations? Examining the Relationship Between Parental Incarceration and Childhood Health*, JOURNAL OF HEALTH AND SOC. BEHAVIOR, vol. 55 no. 3 (2014). <sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS DATA BOOK, Table 1.31 (2013), http://www.ohadatabook.com/T01-31-13.pdf.

Hawaiian community. The Native Hawaiian Criminal Justice Task Force noted this concern in its 2012 report, recommending that state agencies involved with the criminal justice system better collect and integrate data on incarcerated inviduals and that resources specifically be directed toward children of incarcerated parents to reduce intergenerational incarceration.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, to date, no process exists in Hawai'i to systematically collect information on these children to identify and address their unique needs. Previously, in 2006 and again in 2008, a legislatively-created task force identified a lack of data as a major roadblock to the provision of programs and services supporting children of incarcerated parents. Thus far, nothing has been done to address this concern. As a result, Hawai'i lacks even basic data on the number and needs of Hawai'i's keiki with incarcerated parents.

HB998 revives the decade-long effort to better understand the number and unique needs of children of incarcerated parents. The systematic data collection required under this bill is an essential first step in establishing a comprehensive body of data to support the development of programs and services for the children of incarcerated parents, helping our most vulnerable keiki adjust and thrive and reducing the long-term consequences of their unaddressed needs.

OHA believes this bill could be strengthened further by requiring the Department of Public Safety to collect relevant data in addition to the number of incarcerated parents, and the number of children per incarcerated parent. OHA therefore recommends adding an additional subsection (3) to page 3, line 7, to read as follows:

"(3) Any other information about incarcerated parents and	
their children that the department deems useful to facilitate the p	provision of
services to incarcerated parents or their children."	

Such an amendment will enable the Department of Public Safety to continue working with the community of service-providers, families, and interested stakeholders to collect more comprehensive demographic data as needs are better understood and as resources may allow.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> 2012 NATIVE HAWAIIAN JUSTICE TASK FORCE REP. sec.A, at 27, sec. C, at 28, http://www.oha.org/nativehawaiianjusticetaskforce.



- TO: Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair Committee on Public Safety
- HEARING: Thursday, February 5, 2015 9:00 AM Conference Room 309
- FROM: Judith Wilhoite Family Advocate It Takes An `Ohana

#### RE: HB 998 - RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am the Family Advocate for Family Program Hawaii's *It Takes An `Ohana* (ITAO) program and a resource caregiver, formerly referred to as foster parent. I, along with my Advisory Committee, strongly support SB 566.

As resource caregivers, we have a stake in the outcomes of incarcerated parents. Many of our foster children's parents are incarcerated, so we see firsthand how challenging it can be for these parents to reestablish themselves in society. Our understanding is that with the right set of data, organizations such as *Blueprint for Change* will be better equipped to apply for federal funds to help said parents have a successful transition into society. When that happens, we all benefit, including the foster children who are then able to return to their parents.

Thank you for this opportunity to share strong support for HB 988.

From:	mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent:	Monday, February 02, 2015 3:47 PM
To:	pbstestimony
Cc:	lorenn@hawaii.edu
Subject:	*Submitted testimony for HB998 on Feb 5, 2015 09:00AM*

#### <u>HB998</u>

Submitted on: 2/2/2015 Testimony for PBS on Feb 5, 2015 09:00AM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	<b>Testifier Position</b>	Present at Hearing
Lorenn Walker	Hawai'i Friends of Justice & Civic Education	Support	No

Comments:

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.

## COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair Rep. Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair Thursday, February 5, 2015 9:00 a.m. Room 309 SUPPORT for HB 998 – Children of Incarcerated Parents

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies for almost two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 5,600 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars, always mindful that more than 1,600, and soon to be rising number of Hawai`i individuals who are serving their sentences abroad, thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Native Hawaiians, far from their ancestral lands.

HB 998 requires the department of public safety to collect data relating to the number of incoming offenders into the state correctional system who are parents and the number of children they have that are under the age of eighteen.

Community Alliance on Prisons supports this measure.

Data show that children with at least one incarcerated parent are six to seven times more likely to be incarcerated themselves than other children. This is a clarion call to pay attention to the needs of these children.

To date, Hawai`i has no data and who and where these children reside. The Angel Tree, a group that provides Christmas gifts to these children, has been the state's only source for data on these children, but it is not an official number.

Inserting a few lines on the intake service form is at least a start to determine just how many children/youth under 18 years old are impacted by parental incarceration. We *can* stop the flow of intergenerational incarceration when we stop ignoring the fact that every incarcerated person comes from a family, and the families suffer from incarceration as well as the imprisoned person.

An article from December 2014<sup>1</sup> cites much of the current thinking on the issue of children with incarcerated parents:

"Even for kids at high risk of problems, parental incarceration makes a bad situation worse," concluded Christopher Wildeman and Sara Wakefield in their recently published book, <u>Children of the Prison Boom: Mass Incarceration and the Future of American Inequality</u>.

Wildeman and Wakefield found that children with incarcerated fathers were **three times more likely** than peers from similar backgrounds **to become homeless**. They also suffered significantly **higher rates of behavioral and mental-health problems, most notably aggression**.

Kristin Turney, a professor of sociology at the University of California, Irvine, reached similar conclusions in a report published this past September. Turney found that children with incarcerated parents were **three times more likely to suffer from depression or behavioral problems** than the average American child, and **twice as likely to suffer from learning disabilities and anxiety.** 

Within the last few years, however, a broad range of agencies and policy-makers have begun to frame the nation's prison boom as a children's issue. Last summer, the Justice Department launched a wide-reaching campaign to provide support to the children of imprisoned parents – by rethinking visitation policies and changing the protocol for arresting parents in front of children, for example. In August, the American Bar Foundation and the National Science Foundation invited key researchers, advocates and federal officials to the White House for a conference to discuss reducing the "collateral costs" to children and communities when parents are incarcerated. The conference was part of a larger inter-agency initiative begun in 2012 to focus the attention of participating agencies, including the Department of Education, on the children of incarcerated parents. A few months later, in November, the Federal Bureau of Prisons hosted its first-ever Universal Children's Day, an event attended by nearly 8,500 children visiting more than 4,000 federal inmates.

Children's television has provided a pop-culture barometer of the issue's increased prominence. Last summer, Sesame Street introduced Alex, a blue-haired Muppet whose father is in jail. "I don't like to talk about it," Alex told his furry friends, describing his emotions. "Most people don't understand. I just miss him so much. It just hurts inside.... But then sometimes I feel like I just want to pound on a pillow and scream as loud as I can."

As you can see, this issue is finally gaining national prominence.

The Alliance for Children conducted research on the costs of incarcerating parents<sup>2</sup>, below is

<sup>2</sup> Spreading the Pain: The Social Cost of Incarcerating Parents, Thomas E. Lengyel, Department of Research & Evaluation Services, Alliance for Children and Families, September 2006. http://www.alliance1.org/pubs/archive/Incarceration%20%2526%20Corrections/spreading-the-pain-parents

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Mass Incarceration's Collateral Damage: The Children Left Behind, Katy Reckdahl, December 16, 2014. <u>http://www.thenation.com/article/193121/mass-incarcerations-collateral-damage-children-left-behind#</u>

some of their conclusions:

"The extent of the costs implicated in incarcerating parents is hidden from view because, like some diseases, these costs hide in many corners of the body politic and they reemerge at different times after the initial crisis. The full inventory of both costs and benefits is probably more robust than what we have inventoried here.

(...)

The shape of the equation for society is nevertheless clear. **Incarceration is an immensely costly form of social control.** We can now appreciate that these costs do not devolve primarily on the punished person, even when the value of their loss of freedom (i.e., quality of life) is considered. Instead, about **four-tenths (40%) the total social cost of placing a parent behind bars is the** *public's* **loss**, while the losses borne directly by the offender are considerably smaller (26%). ..."

The findings by Lengyel and Brown in a follow up study 2009<sup>3</sup> produced a set of recommendations for corrections policy and judicial practice in Hawai'i, several of which have been advanced in prior studies (Lengyel and Harris 2003; Lengyel 2006).

#### Finding:

### The cost of incarcerating drug offenders greatly exceeds the corresponding social benefit.

Recommendations:

o Practice selective non-incarceration. Shift from incarceration to community supervision and support for certain classes of inmates who are now facing sentencing or serving time. o Savings from prisoner diversion should be invested in programs that delay or forestall incarceration, such as drug abuse treatment and education, job training, and economic opportunity.

#### Finding:

Families, grandparents, and relatives bear the greatest share of costs imposed by the incarceration of a parent. They seldom have adequate resources to fulfill the role they play in the lives of the parent and the parent's children.

#### Recommendations:

o Initiate supports for partners, grandparents, and relative caregivers of children with parents in prison, including respite care, housing assistance, parenting support, and material support.

#### Finding:

Substance abuse treatment services are an appropriate alternative for the majority of drug offenders, but these services are grossly inadequate in prison and fall far short of the need in the community.

#### Recommendations:

o Provide appropriate substance abuse treatment on demand both in the community and in prison.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Everyone Pays: A Social Cost Analysis of Incarcerating Parents for Drug Offenses in Hawai'i, Executive Summary, Thomas E. Lengyel and Marilyn Brown, August 2009

### Finding:

#### Hawai'i lacks accurate knowledge of its parent-prisoners and their children.

#### Recommendations:

o Keep demographic information on all children, on custody (legal and informal), on care giving arrangements, and on services needed or anticipated.

o Integrate family information into the Department of Public Safety central databank on prisoners on a regular basis.

#### Finding:

# Placement on the mainland, based on administrative considerations, forecloses the possibility of visits and imposes stiff costs on families attempting to stay connected.

Recommendations:

o The Department of Public Safety should factor in the ability to maintain parent-child contact when making prison placements.

• Parent inmates should be placed on the basis of "the best interest of the family."

#### Finding:

#### The social costs of incarceration are largely hidden from public view, and remain unacknowledged by the courts when they dispense justice.

Recommendations:

o All presentence investigations that recommend incarceration should include an estimate of the social costs of the recommended term based on the parameters documented in this study, as well as the cost of the best reasonable alternative. Judges should explicitly incorporate these estimates in their sentencing decisions, and should acknowledge in court the weight given to them

In 2009, the federal government issues an action plan<sup>4</sup> for addressing this issue.

- 1. Support a review of law enforcement policies related to arrests of individuals whose children (or children under their care) are present at the time they are taken into custody, and individuals whose children may return home and be unattended because of their arrest.
- 2. Encourage the development of policy standards at the local or state level in cooperation with law enforcement on the response to the arrest of a caretaker parent or guardian of a minor child to ensure the child's safety and well-being.
- 3. Collect and disseminate program and policy examples from law enforcement agencies who have adopted promising approaches to unforeseen contact with children of incarcerated parents.
- 4. Share widely best practices on developing formal partnerships among law enforcement, child welfare agencies, and other providers to coordinate services for children of arrested parents.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Children of Incarcerated Parents: *An Action Plan for Federal Policymakers,* Jessica Nickel, Crystal Garland, Leah Kane, Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2009.

http://csgjusticecenter.org/reentry/publications/children-of-incarcerated-parents-an-action-plan-for-federal-policymakers/

- 5. Develop systems to collect data on the number and percentage of (1) arrestees who are custodial parents, and (2) children present at the time of arrest or who were left unattended because of the arrest, to document the breadth of the problem and understand the circumstances that lead to such arrests.
- 6. Support the implementation of training and protocols to minimize as much as possible the trauma to a child who is present during an arrest and sensitize arresting officers to the potential long-term impact.
- 7. Encourage local jurisdictions to adopt identified best practices for improving responses to children who are present during a parent's arrest.
- 8. Conduct additional research on the impact of parental arrest when a child is present, including the effects of home raids on children and the success of existing protocols and training tools to minimize risk.

Community Alliance on Prisons is heartened that there is a national recognition of the collateral consequences of incarceration. The social costs, as analyzed by these Hawai`i studies and numerous national studies, make it very clear that we are headed down the wrong path if we continue to pass punitive laws that incarcerate those folks we are frustrated with.

# Incarceration should be the LAST RESORT. It has been our experience that most incarcerated parents want to maintain relationships with their children.

Community Alliance on Prisons respectfully asks the committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

From:	mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent:	Monday, February 02, 2015 9:09 PM
To:	pbstestimony
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Subject:	*Submitted testimony for HB998 on Feb 5, 2015 09:00AM*

#### <u>HB998</u>

Submitted on: 2/2/2015 Testimony for PBS on Feb 5, 2015 09:00AM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	<b>Testifier Position</b>	Present at Hearing
Lisa Jaramillo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District

House District: 39 Senate District: 18

Leanne Kealoha Fox ::

February 2, 2015

#### HB998 RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM House Committees on Public Safety & Judiciary

Aloha a welina mai nei e nā alaka'i:

It is with great enthusiasm that I write testimony to **<u>STRONGLY SUPPORT</u>** HB 998 to require the department of public safety to collect data relating to the number of incoming offenders into the state correctional system who are parents and the number of children they have that are under the age of eighteen.

I strongly **SUPPORT HB998** which will require the Department of Public Safety to collect intake data relating to parents in prison and their children. Native Hawaiian children may be more likely to experience the trauma of having parents sent to prison, and there is currently no data being collected to identify these children and support more effective programs and services. I believe that if we know more about these keiki, we can better address the challenges they are experiencing. This bill could support longterm access to grant funding, providing consistent services for children of incarcerated parents, and hopefully reduce the number of children that fall through the cracks. I urge the committee to **PASS** this bill.

l urge the committee to <u>**PASS**</u> HB 998. Respectfully, me ka `oia`i`o.

Leanne Kealoha Fox

Letter of Support for HB998

From:	mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent:	Monday, February 02, 2015 3:45 PM
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Cc:	lorenn@hawaii.edu
Subject:	*Submitted testimony for HB998 on Feb 5, 2015 09:00AM*

#### <u>HB998</u>

Submitted on: 2/2/2015 Testimony for PBS on Feb 5, 2015 09:00AM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	<b>Testifier Position</b>	Present at Hearing
Lorenn Walker	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: Sent:	mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov Monday, February 02, 2015 3:04 PM
To:	pbstestimony
Cc: Subject:	theede@hawaii.rr.com *Submitted testimony for HB998 on Feb 5, 2015 09:00AM*

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#### <u>HB998</u>

Submitted on: 2/2/2015 Testimony for PBS on Feb 5, 2015 09:00AM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	<b>Testifier Position</b>	Present at Hearing
Teri Heede	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: Sent: To: Cc:	mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov Wednesday, February 04, 2015 10:26 PM pbstestimony malnoaton@aol.com	LATE
Subject:	Submitted testimony for HB998 on Feb 5, 2015 09:00AM	
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#### <u>HB998</u>

Submitted on: 2/4/2015 Testimony for PBS on Feb 5, 2015 09:00AM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	<b>Testifier Position</b>	Present at Hearing
Malia Peters	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha, My name is Malia Peters. I am a parent of a child whose father was incarcerated eighteen years ago. I strongly support HB 998 Relating to Public Safety. Eighteen years ago my life was forever changed when my husband (now ex-husband) committed a horrible crime sentencing him to a 20 year prison sentence, which left my three-year-old son and I suddenly in a very difficult situation. While we understood the severity of his crime and prison sentence, we've had a long and challenging road ever since. Helping families of prisoners who are left behind has become a passion in my life, encouraging them that they too can overcome these tough situations. My testimony is simply because I would like to make the road less rough, so that our state and society can have a better chance of decreasing the cycle of incarceration. While there are various estimates of the number of children nationwide who have at least one parent that is incarcerated (over 2 million), we have no idea in our State of Hawaii, of any number of children that are affected. Studies have also shown that in terms of negative impacts on children, incarceration may be worse than the death of a parent or the divorce of parents. When a parent passes away or when parents divorce, families receive a lot of sympathy, love, compassion, an d financial support. In Hawaii, to get a divorce families are required to attend "Kids First", a program to help families survive divorce. However, when a parent is sentenced to prison, there is there is no "program" or "class" to attend, and there is no sympathy. Many family members witnessed or were the victim of the crime, and there is often no emotional or financial assistance for families. The surviving spouse, significant other, or grandparent is often the sole provider putting physical, emotional, mental, and financial strain on families. Something more concerning is the evidence that children who have a parent in prison are more likely to become incarcerated themselves as teenagers or adults, thus continuing the "cycle of incarceration" that sadly be comes generational in some families. Having been through this personally, I wish I could be there in person to share with you first hand how difficult this experience was for my son and I. I never wanted to ask for help for fear that I would minimize the horrible crime that my husband had committed and offend the victim and their family. I was also didn't ask for help because I was embarrassed to share why my husband was incarcerated. When I became desperate enough to seek assistance, I didn't know where to turn, and when I did try to apply for various types of assistance we didn't qualify because I was working. My single income however was not sustainable to support my son and I, which forced me to take a second job. My son now lost both his parents,

became mute, and we had no medical coverage to get him the emotional support he needed. It was a horrible thing to go through and it is only by the grace of God, the family I was blessed with, that I am able to stand strong today, with my son grown and by my side, sharing my story with each of you. It's taken me years to talk about this but I am realizing that this may be my purpose in life...to make a difference for others who are going through the same thing. I recently joined the Hawaii Prisoners Resource Center, dba Holomua Center, who has established a working group to explore the issues surrounding children and families impacted by incarceration. We are called the Family Reunification Working Group (FRWG), the group is comprised of representatives from several organizations and service providers who want to support this population. Having data/statistics illustrating the number of children affected by incarceration is critical for so many reasons. At the very least, we need to know as a state and as a society, how many children (especially children under the age of 18) are affected. We need to understand who the caregivers are for these children in the parents' absence. This information is important to understand the magnitude of what we think is a concerning issue (is it as bad as we think)? Finally, we need data to enable our state and various organizations to submit for grants that can provide various types of support (physical, emotional, educational, financial) to families who are specifically affected by incarceration. Some have argued/commented that prisoners won't be truthful on the intake form and won't voluntarily provide this information for fear they will penalize for child support, or for fear that their children will be taken away from them. I disagree, and feel strongly that if they fully understood the reason for these questions, and that their family may qualify for help, that they would cooperate and provide the information. I remember my husband feeling helpless and frustrated knowing the hardship we were going through because of his careless acts, which lead to bad behavior behind bars. Participating in answering these guestions would be a small thing a prisoner with a family can do while inside to improve the circumstances their family is in. Without this type of basic information, it is very difficult to advocate and seek assistance and opportunities for this unique population. Our state needs help taking care of these children and these families that are affected. We need to reduce the cycle of incarceration and we should do whatever we can to make seeking outside funding opportunities possible. Mahalo nui to each of you for your service, and for your consideration of this letter of support. With much aloha and blessings, Malia Peters

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From:	mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov	LATE
Sent:	Wednesday, February 04, 2015 10:01 PM	
To:	pbstestimony	
Cc:	blawaiianlvr@icloud.com	
Subject:	*Submitted testimony for HB998 on Feb 5, 201	5 09:00AM*
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up	
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#### <u>HB998</u>

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Submitted By	Organization	<b>Testifier Position</b>	Present at Hearing
De MONT R. D. CONNER	Individual	Support	No

#### Comments:

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From:	mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent:	Wednesday, February 04, 2015 1:24 PM
To:	pbstestimony
Cc:	evernw@aol.com
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#### HB998

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Submitted By	Organization	<b>Testifier Position</b>	Present at Hearing
Evern Williams	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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## TESTIMONY ON HB 998 RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

February 5, 2015

9:00 am

Conference Rm. 309

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and members of the House Committee on Public Safety, **my name is Stephen Morse.** I am the Executive Director of Blueprint for Change (BFC) and am here today to support HB 998 Relating to Public Safety.

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 a POS contract with the Department of Human Services. The several varied risk factors in the families, including homelessness or unstable housing, unemployment and low incomes, substance abuse, chronic health problems, and physical disabilities. Two years ago, after much research and analysis, BFC determined that one of the increasing 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.

Three other statistics from the 2008 Bureau of Judicial Statistics Report also reveal the alarming extent of this problem. First, parents of minor children held in the nation's prisons increased by 79% between 1991 and mid-2007. Second, more than a third of minor children will reach the age of 18 while their parents are incarcerated. And, third, incarcerated parents of minor children are most likely to be between the ages of 24 to 35.

These statistics have not gone unnoticed by children and family serving organizations in Hawaii who have developed mentoring and other types of social services aimed at assisting these children. However, there continues to be major gaps in services for these children, because funding for programs aimed at helping them has never been established as a priority. A major reason why this issue is not a funding priority in Hawaii is that service providers have not had the data to justify the extent of the problem in Hawaii. This is especially true for service providers who are trying to access federal funding that is programmed to assist children and families and break the cycle of incarceration.

The reason service providers don't have this data is because it is not being collected by the State.

In January 2014, the Legislative Keiki Caucus, at the request of BFC and the Hawaii Prisoners Resource Center, dba Holomua Center, established a working group to explore the issues surrounding children and families impacted by incarceration. Called the Family Reunification Working Group (FRWG), the group is comprised of representatives from several organizations and service providers, including Blueprint for Change, Hawaii Prisoners Resource Center, dba Holomua Center, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, ALU LIKE, Inc., Queen Lili`uokalani Children's Center, Keiki O Ka Aina Learning Centers, Family Programs Hawaii, Adult Friends for Youth, Community Alliance on Prisons, TJ Mahoney, Chaminade University's Native Hawaiian Program, and Makana O Ke Akua Clean and Sober Living. It also included parents of children who have been affected by incarceration. The group established two immediate priorities to work on, one of which was to develop a database of children in Hawaii impacted by incarceration, and during the past year, it explored various ways to collect the data needed to identity the number and basic demographics of these children. After much discussion and analysis, it concluded that the fastest and easiest way to collect the essential data needed was to add at least one, two-part question to the current form now used by the Hawaii Department of Public Safety's Corrections Division to intake offenders entering the Hawaii corrections system.

Our working group stands ready to work with the Department in any way we can to help collect this data.

Mahalo for allowing us to share this testimony with the Committee.

From:	mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent:	Thursday, February 05, 2015 8:11 AM
To:	pbstestimony
Cc:	wusstig@gmail.com
Subject:	*Submitted testimony for HB998 on Feb 5, 2015 09:00AM*

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Submitted By	Organization	<b>Testifier Position</b>	Present at Hearing
Kenny Wusstig	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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