



**LATE**

# SR55

Measure Title:

ENCOURAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY TO CONTINUE AND EXPAND ITS COMMUNITY-BASED WORK FURLOUGH PROGRAMS TO ASSIST FORMERLY INCARCERATED FEMALE INMATES TRANSITION BACK INTO SOCIETY.

Report Title:

Transitional programs for incarcerated women.

Description:

Companion:

Package:

Women's Legislative Caucus

Current Referral:

PSM, JDL/WAM

Introducer(s):

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## SCR84/SR55

### ENCOURAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY TO CONTINUE AND EXPAND ITS COMMUNITY-BASED WORK FURLOUGH PROGRAMS TO ASSIST FORMERLY INCARCERATED FEMALE INMATES TRANSITION BACK INTO SOCIETY

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

March 24, 2016

2:00 p.m.

Room 229

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment will recommend that the Board of Trustees take a position of **SUPPORT** for SCR84/SR55, which would urge the Department of Public Safety (PSD) to continue and grow its highly successful work furlough program for pa‘ahao women.

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 between 1977 and 2010, the number of people incarcerated in Hawai‘i increased by more than 900%,<sup>1</sup> with this surge most greatly impacting Native Hawaiians. Although they account for just 24 percent of the general population, Native Hawaiians represent 27 percent of all arrested individuals, 33 percent of those held in pretrial detention, 29 percent of those sentenced to probation, 36 percent of those admitted to prison, 39 percent of the adult incarcerated population, and, most notably, 44 percent of the female incarcerated population.<sup>2</sup> In addition to being disproportionately arrested and convicted, Native Hawaiians are also more likely to be sentenced to a longer probation term, to receive a prison sentence, to receive a longer prison sentence, and to be sent to an out-of-state facility, compared to any other racial or ethnic group.<sup>3</sup>

The 2012 Native Hawaiian Justice Task Force Report subsequently identified several factors exacerbating the disproportionate impact of the criminal justice system on Native Hawaiians. These included barriers to employment, housing, and reintegration into the community, which may lead to greater levels of recidivism by formerly incarcerated pa‘ahao.<sup>4</sup> Community-based work furlough programs, such as Ka Hale Ho‘āla Hou No Nā Wāhine, may be critical to addressing these barriers. Such programs provide pa‘ahao with valuable opportunities to develop marketable skills, prosocial behaviors, and a positive work ethic, thereby increasing their ability to secure employment and find housing. Community-

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<sup>1</sup> THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, THE DISPARATE TREATMENT OF NATIVE HAWAIIANS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM 17 (2010), [http://www.oha.org/sites/default/files/ir\\_final\\_web\\_rev.pdf](http://www.oha.org/sites/default/files/ir_final_web_rev.pdf). SYSTEM 17 (2010), [http://www.oha.org/sites/default/files/ir\\_final\\_web\\_rev.pdf](http://www.oha.org/sites/default/files/ir_final_web_rev.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 28-31.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 31-34.

<sup>4</sup> THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, NATIVE HAWAIIAN JUSTICE TASK FORCE REPORT 8, 20 (2012), [http://lrbhawaii.info/reports/legrpts/oha/2013/act170\\_slh11.pdf](http://lrbhawaii.info/reports/legrpts/oha/2013/act170_slh11.pdf).

based reentry programs may also offer communal living arrangements for a transitional period, enabling pa‘ahao to find stability and support each other as they prepare to reintegrate with their communities. By addressing such common barriers to reentry, PSD’s community-based work furlough programs may significantly reduce recidivism rates, and should be supported for the betterment of our pa‘ahao and communities.

Therefore, OHA respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** SCR84/SR55. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.