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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO PRISONS.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's prison  
2 system houses many more inmates than it was designed to  
3 accommodate. Hawaii has a population of approximately five  
4 thousand six hundred inmates, costing the State about \$52,000  
5 per inmate per year. One reason the prison system is  
6 overburdened is that 49.6 per cent of convicted felons return to  
7 prison within one year of their release. However, forty-three  
8 per cent of people who seek and attain education in prison are  
9 less likely to return. Accordingly, reducing recidivism by ten  
10 inmates would save the State about \$520,000 annually.

11           The legislature further finds that in order to reduce  
12 recidivism, several states have established programs that  
13 include training and mentoring to give inmates an opportunity to  
14 learn entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and business skills  
15 that will facilitate their reentry into society. The Darden  
16 School of Business and the University of Virginia have partnered  
17 with the Dillwyn Correctional Center to teach eligible and



1 willing inmate students business skills to reduce recidivism.  
2 Recidivism rates in Virginia are currently about twenty-three  
3 per cent while the rate is seventy per cent nationally. Similar  
4 programs have been established in other jurisdictions such as  
5 the District of Columbia through the Georgetown University  
6 McDonough School of Business and New York through Columbia  
7 Business School. An initial investment in this type of program  
8 has potential for enormous cost savings for the State.

9       The purpose of this Act is to establish a four-year pilot  
10 program in Hawaii to reduce recidivism by providing inmates with  
11 the skills necessary to succeed in the workforce and appropriate  
12 funds for the program.

13       SECTION 2. (a) There is created within the department of  
14 public safety a working group that shall establish a pilot  
15 program to reduce recidivism. Members of the working group  
16 shall be selected by the director of public safety, who shall  
17 serve as chairperson.

18       (b) The department of public safety shall coordinate with  
19 an accredited institution of higher education to create a  
20 program designed to reduce recidivism. The program shall focus  
21 on providing inmates with business, entrepreneurial, and



1 financial literacy education to set a foundation for the inmates  
2 to succeed after their release from incarceration. The program  
3 may be scalable, beginning with a pilot cohort of individuals,  
4 and expanded as appropriate.

5 (c) The working group shall submit to the legislature the  
6 following reports on the status of the pilot program, along with  
7 any proposed legislation, as follows:

8 (1) An interim report, no later than twenty days prior to  
9 the convening of the regular session of 2022; and

10 (2) A final report, no later than twenty days prior to the  
11 convening of the regular session of 2024.

12 (d) The working group and pilot program shall cease to  
13 exist on June 30, 2024.

14 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
16 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for the  
17 pilot program established pursuant to this Act.

18 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
19 public safety for the purposes of this Act.

20 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

DPS; Prisons; Recidivism; Pilot Program; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes a four-year pilot program and working group within the Department of Public Safety to reduce recidivism by providing business education to inmates. Requires reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2050.  
(SD1)

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