
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SOCIAL WORK.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State is facing
2 a shortage of social workers to help people in the State manage
3 their mental health and cope with stressors in their everyday
4 lives. This shortage is of concern as social workers already
5 have full caseloads and may be unable to provide additional
6 services, which may in turn intensify the need for help and
7 increase burnout among social workers. The demand for social
8 workers will likely continue to rise, especially during the
9 COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, as individuals experiencing
10 depression, anxiety, life transitions, and other mental health
11 challenges will need social workers' support to address
12 difficult or stressful life situations.

13 The legislature further finds that some nonviolent
14 incarcerated individuals may have experienced the need for
15 social services or may have firsthand experience receiving
16 services from social workers that make them uniquely qualified
17 to enter the field of social work as assistants after undergoing



1 training. The legislature also finds that to address the
2 shortage of social workers and lack of social services in the
3 State, providing social work training to nonviolent incarcerated
4 individuals can help these individuals reintegrate into society
5 once their period of incarceration is over.

6 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require and
7 appropriate funds for the department of public safety, in
8 collaboration with the department of human services, to develop
9 and establish a program to train incarcerated nonviolent
10 individuals in the area of social work.

11 SECTION 2. Chapter 353H, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
12 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
13 and to read as follows:

14 **"§353H- Incarcerated individuals; social work training**
15 **program; established.** (a) The department shall develop and
16 establish a program, in collaboration with the department of
17 human services, to train incarcerated nonviolent misdemeanants
18 and petty misdemeanants in the area of social work to become
19 eligible for employment as assistants to licensed social workers
20 or individuals on a pathway to be a licensed social worker.



1 (b) The department may coordinate with accredited
 2 institutions of higher education, private entities, and
 3 nonprofit organizations to provide training to participating
 4 individuals in the area of social work.

5 (c) The department shall establish rules pursuant to
 6 chapter 91 to implement this section."

7 SECTION 3. The department of public safety, in
 8 collaboration with the department of human services, shall
 9 prepare a report on their progress in developing and
 10 establishing the program pursuant to section 2 of this Act and
 11 shall submit the report to the legislature no later than twenty
 12 days prior to the convening of the regular sessions of 2023 and
 13 2024.

14 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
 15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
 16 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for
 17 the development and establishment of a program to train certain
 18 incarcerated nonviolent individuals in the area of social work
 19 pursuant to this Act.

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



H.B. NO. 1543

1 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

2 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval;

3 provided that section 4 shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

4

INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 19 2022



H.B. NO. 1543

Report Title:

Department of Public Safety; Department of Human Services;
Social Work; Training; Incarcerated Nonviolent Individuals;
Appropriation

Description:

Requires the department of public safety, in collaboration with the department of human services, to develop and establish a program to train incarcerated nonviolent individuals in the area of social work. Requires progress reports on the program to the legislature. Appropriates funds.

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