



The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i

Testimony to the Thirty-Second Legislature, 2023 Regular Session

House Committee on Finance

Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 22, 2023, 2:30 p.m.
Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference

by:

Rodney A. Maile
Administrative Director of the Courts

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 1130, H.D. 1, Relating to Corrections.

Purpose: The purpose of this Act is to appropriate moneys to the Department of Public Safety to administer level 1 trauma-informed certification programs for adult corrections officers statewide. The bill is effective 6/30/3000.

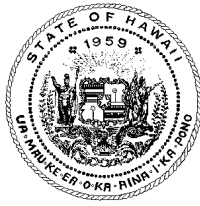
Judiciary’s Position:

The Judiciary SUPPORTS the intent of this measure, and recognizes the need for a trauma-informed approach across the justice system.

Many people who come into our courts have experienced trauma in their lives, which can have lasting adverse effects on long-term mental and physical health. In addition, it can influence behavior and limit an individual’s ability to effectively participate in the judicial process. Understanding trauma and implementing trauma-informed practices can improve outcomes. We regularly make training on trauma-informed care available to our judges and court staff, and are supportive of this opportunity for adult corrections officers to have a trauma-informed certification program.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



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TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1130, HD1
RELATING TO CORRECTIONS

By

Tommy Johnson, Director
Department of Public Safety

House Committee on Finance
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair,
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 22, 2023; 2:30 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 and via Video Conference

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committees:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports House Bill (HB) 1130, HD 1, which seeks to appropriate an unspecified amount of funding to Windward Community College (WCC) to support a Level I trauma-informed care certification program for Adult Corrections Officers (ACOs) that is based on an existing course implemented by the WCC for mental health technicians at Hawai'i state hospital, which has already been proven successful. As currently written, the PSD would be the spending agency

PSD's ACOs may benefit from this voluntary trauma-informed care certification training in interacting with individuals in the corrections and rehabilitation system who have experienced serious trauma during their lifetime.

ACOs wishing to participate in trauma-informed care certification training would do so on their own personal time at no cost to PSD or the State of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1130, HD1.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, February 22, 2023 at 2:30 p.m.

By

Della Teraoka, Interim Associate Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

HB 1130 HD1 – RELATING TO CORRECTIONS

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB1130 HD1, which creates a Trauma Informed Care Course (TICC) designed for Adult Corrections Officers (ACOs) taught by WCC.

According to the Center for Disease Control, 97% of inmates have had at least one traumatic childhood experience. A large national study found that 40.1% of female inmates and 17.8% of male inmates suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Other studies have found 30% of male inmates have current PTSD symptoms and 60% have lifetime PTSD. Incarceration compounds potential trauma related issues, as it is an environment where the incarcerated feel a lack of personal control over situations and their own safety. Due to this, individuals may remain in a constant state high alert due to concern for personal safety and may be triggered by perceived threats and actions and/or interactions which remind them of past trauma. This can lead to inappropriate responses, including aggression, violence, anxiety, depression and self-harm. Suicides are the leading cause of jail deaths nationwide. These impacts of trauma create a negative environment for the incarcerated individual, fellow prisoners, and the prison staff.

A TICC helps those serving incarcerated populations to better manage this population through understanding the impact of trauma. ACOs will be provided information on the lifelong effects of trauma, recovery needs and implementation of trauma-focused treatment interventions, including evidence based best practice. Trauma triggers and examples of calming and grounding strategies will be discussed to help staff conduct their work more effectively and with less frustration. Vicarious trauma impacting correctional staff and suggestions for self-care will also be explored.

This TICC positively impacts the prison environment for both workers and incarcerated individuals, and can have further positive impacts on retaining staffing due to decreased workplace frustration.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 1130 HD1, on the condition its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1130 HD1.



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Honorable Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

HEARING DATE: Wednesday, February 22, 2023
TIME: 2:30 PM, Via Videoconference & Conference Room 308

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB1130 HD1 RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN.

[Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice](#) (HFRJ) strongly supports this measure appropriating funds necessary for Windward Community College (WCC) to create and provide a trauma informed certification program for adult correctional offices. I am Diana Bethel, Phd, working with HFRJ.

HFRJ has studied best practices [for youth](#) since 1980. In 2004 HFRJ began studying and working with state adult prisons working to develop evidence based knowledge and what works to [decrease incarceration](#) and increase peaceful behavior. HFRJ's experiences working in the prisons indicate that incarcerated people in Hawai'i suffer from a disproportionate share of [childhood abuse, neglect, and trauma](#). This is true for [other states](#) as well.

This bill would give WCC the means to create and provide a "level I trauma-informed certification program" for state adult correctional officers (ACOs). This would be for officers who *volunteer for the training*. While the state should require all ACOs to have knowledge about trauma informed care because most incarcerated people have experienced significant trauma, this program is for those ACOs who actively seek out more specialized training.

There are important differences in programs and learning when one is required to learn something compared to when one chooses to learn something, and earn a certification based on their individual efforts. A college certification is proposed here, which is different from mandating and requiring someone to learn something. This difference was discussed when continuing education was originally [suggested for nurses over 40 years ago](#): *Requirements for voluntary continuing education programs are higher than those required by most licensing boards to meet their mandatory requirements. This is because it is a recognition program, and the recognition represents an achievement beyond the minimal requirements established by licensing boards.*

The ACOs that choose to earn this trauma-informed certification would likely become assets to the Department of Public Safety (PSD) in role modeling the value in learning this vital subject. They would also provide specialized information to other ACOs and staff who know only what PSD requires them to learn. If PSD were most concerned with advancing trauma informed care in its institutions, it would give the ACOs who earned this certification pay increases.

Hawai'i in general [lacks training](#) opportunities for corrections professionals and especially in trauma informed care, which is vital for assisting incarcerated people and for those who work with them. Our state jails and prisons are our [de facto mental institutions](#). Corrections professionals need special skills to help the incarcerated. These skills can also help keep correctional staff and others safe while performing their duties. This measure would help address important needs and create a more rehabilitative and professional environment by creating a voluntary certification program.

We urge the Committee to please pass this bill. If you have any questions about HFRJ's support or would like more details about our testimony, please contact Loren Walker, JD, MPH, at lorenn@hawaii.edu or (808) 218-3712.

Opportunity Youth Action Hawai'i

February 22, 2023

House Committee on Finance

Hearing Time: 02:30 p.m.

Location: State Capitol

Re: HB 1130 HD1, Relating to Corrections

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, and members of the Committee:

We are writing in **strong support of** HB 1130 HD1, Relating to Corrections.

This bill will appropriate moneys to the department of public safety to administer level I trauma-informed certification programs for adult corrections officers statewide.

The majority, if not all, of those in correctional facilities suffer from trauma of some sort. The people who interact with those in the facilities the most, the corrections officers, should have adequate training and be educated in safe and effective trauma-informed care. Trauma-informed trainings would greatly benefit the health and security of both the inmates and the officers.

Our collective, Opportunity Youth Action Hawai'i (OYAH), works to support young people under the age of 25 who are disconnected from school and work, referred to as "opportunity youth." This developmental time period is extremely consequential to the individual growth and overall life chances of our children. **We support this measure.**

Opportunity Youth Action Hawai'i is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth; promoting equity in the justice system; and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs. We seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth houselessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally-informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.

Please support HB 1130 HD1.

HB-1130-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 2:01:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Rich	Women?s Prison Project	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 22, 2023 2:30 p.m.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE Conference Room 308

State Capitol

STRONG SUPPORT HB1130 RELATING TO CORRECTIONS.

Women’s Prison Project strongly supports HB1130, which would establish a basic trauma Informed care course designed for Adult Corrections officers and provided by Windward Community College (WCC). WCC has previously designed and successfully implemented a similar course for mental health workers at the Hawaii State Hospital and has demonstrated the capacity to work with state organizations to bring about organizational change.

The 2019 HCR 85 TASK FORCE report to the legislature emphasized the need for trauma informed corrections staff, especially in the Women’s Community Correctional System.

Research has consistently found that a high percentage of incarcerated persons have experienced extensive trauma, often since childhood. The prevalence of trauma, including sexual assault and abuse is particularly high among women. Traumatized individuals are often easily triggered by interactions and procedures that raise feelings and memories associated with past trauma, especially in an environment where others have power and control over them. This can lead to aggression and resistance or to depression, anxiety and suicidality, affecting the safety of both staff and the inmates themselves.

It is now considered a standard best practice in settings working with vulnerable populations, to view persons and the impact of the environment, including the actions of personnel, through the

lens of trauma. By understanding the impact of trauma and approaching interactions and procedures in a trauma informed manner, the rate of re-traumatization and the incidence of aggressive or self harming behavior can be reduced. Trauma Informed environments and staff are more successful at rehabilitation. Incarcerated individuals who feel respected and emotionally safe act out less and are more open to learning new behaviors. Trauma Informed responses are important to reducing recidivism. Hawaii's recidivism rate is among the highest in the country. It is time to seriously

If Hawaii's correction system is to move toward a more rehabilitative approach, trauma informed training of staff is necessary.

Women's Prison Project urges the legislature pass HB1130 and invest in a more effective corrections system by appropriating funds to Windward Community College to initiate this Trauma Informed Care Training for the Adult Corrections Officers who interact daily with the people in Hawaii's prisons.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Linda Rich

On Behalf of Women's Prison project.

HB-1130-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 8:43:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1130 HD1.

HB-1130-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 11:15:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vi Schap	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in favor of HB1130 because I believe there is a significant disparity between trauma-informed care and our criminal justice system. House Bill 1130 would be a step in the right direction in creating a compassionate, educated correctional system.

Hawaii is unique in its impact by historical and generational trauma, though consideration is grossly overlooked for incarcerated individuals. Often, systemic issues contribute largely to individuals committing crimes, and those incarcerated need support more than ever to survive and thrive in our society.

When it is understood that rehabilitative justice prevents recidivism and crime, our society will be a stronger, safer environment. We need to keep taking measures to help those incarcerated, rather than pure punitive justice. I believe those who take on the job of a corrections officer, must be educated with a trauma-informed, empathetic lens where they can see those incarcerated as individuals rather than the charge they are incarcerated for.

Having power over another individual can have dire consequences, as has been seen in the famous Zimbardo prison study (Zimbardo 1974). It is highly important in the power dynamics created by incarceration, that those employed must be accurately educated on psychology, history, and through a trauma-informed lens.

I believe HB 1130 has the potential for lowering recidivism rates and is a necessary step in creating a more ethical and compassionate environment for those incarcerated.