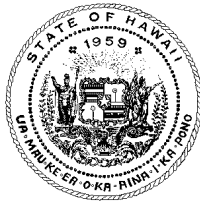


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
AND REHABILITATION**  
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalu Kalaima  
a Ho'oponopono Ola*  
1177 Alakea Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**TOMMY JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

**Melanie Martin**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**Vacant**  
Deputy Director  
Correctional Institutions

**Sanna Muñoz**  
Deputy Director  
Rehabilitation Services  
and  
Programs

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1735  
RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAMS.

by  
Tommy Johnson, Director  
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans  
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Representative Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 7, 2024; 9:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 430 & via Videoconference

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) supports House Bill (HB) 1735, which proposes to expand programming and training for the comprehensive offender re-entry program to reduce the rate of recidivism and increase inmate marketability.

While the vast majority of the "earn and learn" programs nationally are geared towards at-risk youth, the DCR believes this type of program can be successfully implemented for adult justice-involved persons. To implement, maintain, and ensure the success of this type of program, the DCR will require funding for teachers, and staff specializing in employment services and job readiness. This can be accomplished by contracting with non-profit agencies that specialize in teaching and assisting justice-involved persons with job readiness training and coordinating with tradecraft unions and employers in the community.

In addition, the DCR would require additional funding to expand current initiatives such as our carpentry apprentice program with the carpenter's union to include other tradecraft unions as well. Although DCR's Corrections Program Services Division

(CPSD) already provides a wide range of educational opportunities and post-secondary education programs, we are always interested in expanding evidence-based programs and services that help justice-involved persons successfully transition and reintegrate back into the community.

Offenders are consistently encouraged to participate in programs aimed at increasing their marketability, lowering their risk of recidivism, and increasing their level of education. However, some tradecraft programs and career paths for justice-involved persons such as cosmetology, hair cutting, and nurse's aide, have such an intensive curriculum, that the Hawai'i State board requirements make it extremely difficult to obtain certification prior to the release of offenders. The DCR believes in and supports House Bill 1735, but there will need to be additional discussions with employers, Unions, Hawai'i State Boards, etc., to create and implement a sustainable and successful earn-and-learn program. The DCR stands ready to participate in those discussions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1735.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
**HAWAII PAROLING AUTHORITY**  
*Ka 'Ākena Palola o Hawai'i*  
1177 Alakea Street, First Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

EDMUND "FRED" HYUN  
CHAIR

GENE DEMELLO, JR.  
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MILTON H. KOTSUBO  
CAROL K. MATAYOSHI  
MEMBERS

COREY J. REINCKE  
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1735 RELATING TO  
OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAMS

by  
Edmund "Fred" Hyun  
Chairman, Hawaii Paroling Authority

House Committee on Corrections, Military, and Veterans  
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Representative Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 7, 2024, 9:30 a.m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 430 and Via Video Conference

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of Committee:

The Hawaii Paroling Authority (HPA) stands in strong support of HB 1735 to expand programming and training for the comprehensive offender re-entry program under the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR). The HPA firmly believes improving the education and marketability of inmates will reduce the likelihood of re-offending and future incarceration. We have witnessed successes with improved confidence, self-esteem and financial sustainability based on education, apprenticeship, mentorship, and counseling.

The best outcome would be that those coming out of prison are given the tools to succeed and become law abiding and contributing citizens in the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on HB 1735. We will be available to answer questions the committee members may have.

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 7:01:01 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jamie Detwiler	Hawaii Federation of Republican Women	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawai'i Federation of Republican Women is in strong support of HB1735.

HB1735 addresses the needs of the individual who has served their time in prison and is preparing to re-enter life in the community.

It is comprehensive covering the areas of education and training, employment, health, housing and public safety.

Please vote YES for HB1735.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Detwiler, President

Hawaii Federation of Republican Women



The Institute for Human Services, Inc.  
Ending the Cycle of Homelessness

**TO:** Honorable Rep. Mark J. Hashem  
Chair, House Committee on Corrections, Military and Veterans  
  
Honorable Rep. Cory M. Chun  
Vice-Chair, House Committee on Corrections, Military and Veterans

**FROM:** Connie Mitchell, Executive Director  
IHS, The Institute for Human Services, Inc.

**RE:** HB1735 - Relating to Offender Reentry Programs.

**HEARING:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 9:30 AM

**POSITION:** IHS **supports** the passing of HB1735

In 2019, IHS opened two re-entry homes, one for men and one for women. Now, IHS, The Institute for Human Services, operates four permanent supportive housing sites as part of our Community Re-Entry Program, three for men and one for women. Per a 2018 national study, 49% of reported offenders become repeat offenders upon release. Coincidentally, 50% are homeless upon release. This measure provides opportunities and funding to equip individuals with their best foot forward as they re-enter the workforce and community upon release.

Across our programs, we have seen the benefit of investing in life skills teachings for budgeting, nutrition, parenting, and interpersonal skills. IHS is in support of the expansion of education and life skills programming that this measure allows. However, it is crucial that consistency is maintained for this program to be successful. For example, once case management and/or mentorship is introduced in prison, that same care must be carried through beyond the release of participants. Through partnering with service providers, the continuum of re-entry services can sustainably provide robust wrap-around services. As we have seen with our clients, continued and consistent communication with a services navigator can mean the difference between seeking help when overwhelmed or falling back into former habits.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 8:04:14 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joy Schoenecker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Provide the incarcerated individuals an opportunity to gain skills to help them to become gainfully employed - enhance their self esteem -to be self sufficient - an asset to society and -lessen their desire to commit crime and-reduce their return to incarceration !

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 9:14:50 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian Urquhart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Definitely support the bill, it is crucial to give these inmate's life skills. Not only would it be productive, but it would definitely reduce the recidivism rate. Mahalo Nui

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 6:15:37 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
I. Robert Nehmad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a resident in the State of Hawaii and support this bill.



**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 7:18:17 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dennis Mahaffay	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it addresses a critical need in our prison system. It is the responsible thing to do to prevent prisoners from re-entering society without the skills necessary to succeed.

Dennis Mahaffay

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 3:16:32 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
tony frascarelli	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this or any other bill that provides for education or marketable skill for inmates in order to keep them from becoming repeat offenders. Hawaii's recidivism rate is too high.

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 5:38:20 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Bishop	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB1735 which will provide our incarcerated populations marketable skills and an education that will better prepare them for a successful transition to life outside prison. Expanding "earn and learn" programs for eligible inmates to participate in supervised apprenticeships allows them to work towards licensure while getting paid. Rather than using their time idling, inmates can develop marketable skills, earn income, and be established in a trade which they can then continue upon release. Increasing programs that work with non-profit organizations and the business community to secure job positions for inmates that have completed necessary career training programs and have the required qualifications also offers hope and critical opportunities for this population in need.

In addition, HB1735 will allow for programs that encourage inmates who lack a high school diploma to obtain one while incarcerated by matching inmates with an advisor, mentor, or guidance counselor. Eligible inmates will also be able to participate in programs through community colleges or universities.

This compassionate bill makes so much sense - Mahalo innadvance for your strong support for HB1735!

With Aloha,

Lisa Bishop

Hawaii resident, homeowner, taxpayer, voter

Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Thank you for hearing this bill today. I am writing in strong support as this legislation has the opportunity to beneficially transform Hawaii's prison system and end the systematic suffering that has plagued this state for too long.

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, a non-partisan, non-profit, research organization, Hawaii has a drastically higher incarceration rate (439 per 100,000) than most autocratic nations, including China (121), Iran (228), Sudan (52), and Myanmar (171).

Of Hawaii's incarcerated population, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are disproportionately affected as they make up only 10% of the state's general population, yet 44% of the incarcerated population. This shocking disparity is both unjust and representative of a broken system. Additionally, according to Hawaii's Legislative Reference Bureau, the state's recidivism rate is over 50%, which clearly demonstrates a cycle of violence and despair, with inmates being released back into society with no marketable skills, job opportunities, or hope.

Every measure must be taken to decrease the number of repeat offenders who are significantly disadvantaged by this system. Every inmate in Hawaii's prison system deserves the opportunity for a fresh start and a better life once their debt to society has been paid. The best way to do this is to fund prison education and work programs that would allow inmates to gain marketable skills and achieve higher education. According to the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, prison workforce and education programs reduce the likelihood of recidivism by 14.8%. The findings also show a 6.9% increase in the likelihood of employment and higher wages for those who complete the programs. However, it is important to note that if passed, this bill wouldn't just improve the lives of those who are incarcerated and those being released from prison, but also all citizens of Hawaii by lowering the amount of state funding allocated to prisons, thereby lowering the state's inconceivably high tax rates.

Hawaii's prison system is substantially underfunded and the outcome is as expected. Those who go to prison are bound to return, due to the lack of opportunities and resources provided. This bill provides the legislature an opportunity to enact change for the betterment of society and the people they are sworn to represent. I stand irrefutably and wholeheartedly in support of HB1735 and request the committee pass this bill.

Respectfully,

Collin Ford

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 11:42:10 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Seth Kamemoto	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Before we spend more money and resources trying to give inmates more opportunity, I believe that we need to ensure that our general population has sufficient opportunities. Any tax dollars spent here, and any job given out in these types of programs, is one less tax dollar and one less job for a non-inmate.

An inmate already has all living expenses covered; if we now pay them to do a job, even if "subsidized", they might be better off than a hard-working non-inmate who is burdened with our extremely high cost of living. If this subsidy reduces the cost of labor in that category, it exacerbates the problem of non-livable wages for our general community.

I do think the high school equivalency certificate is a great goal, as well as having mentors and coaches to show that there can be a different lifestyle for these inmates when they are released. However, for the actual jobs and licensing, I'd rather see those types of programs funded through the Community Colleges, for example, where the opportunity would be available to all residents.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Seth Kamemoto

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 6:31:20 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ellen Tanoura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Crime, homelessness, prisoner recycling are all tied into people not knowing that they have talents and skills that can insure them that they have a purpose in life. This can only be recognized by educating them with life skills and workforce knowledge to be used when they return to society. When they return, they need to be monitored and guided by the best counselors and educators and case managers. Please don't reinvent the wheel and create another agency. Moanalua Community School for Adults already have a program on Work force readiness using a teacher and technology. This program also works with the military. They eirk with high school dropouts, and my organization of teachers (DKG) are tutoring the kids at Kahauiki Vilbage and recently started an adult class so families,mostly Pacific Islanders, can gain an education that makes them more work force ready and can make their children better ready. Embedded in gaining skills are topics such as pride, learning to be job ready, being articulate, filling out forms, nutritions, crafts that can become fruitful for earning money. As an offshoot a few ladies who sew are learning new ways to sew and are now dreaming of money earning projects. The mindset and scenario needs to be flipped. We are only a mucroscopic organization but we are trying to start to make an impact. Please consult Lance Jyo at Moanalua Community School for adults and Duane Kurisu builder of Kahauiki Vilbage who know of our projects.

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 2:31:56 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Liv Knutsen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Liv Knutsen, and I am a high school student. As a high school student, I've observed and heard of young people making dangerous and illegal decisions. In the worst cases, these people go to prison without having finished their education or gained meaningful work experience. They come out of prison lacking the skills to restart their lives and turn to crime again, creating a dangerous cycle in which people are trapped due to the lack of help the government provides. This bill would reduce recidivism by allowing inmates to gain marketable skills and education while incarcerated to obtain better opportunities once released.

According to the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, prison workforce and education programs reduce the likelihood of recidivism by 14.8%, increase the likelihood of employment by 6.9%, and an extra \$131 in quarterly wages. Not only is this bill good for inmates, but it would keep crime rates low and criminals off the streets. Neighborhoods with low crime generally have houses with better prices and happier people.

It is no secret how much good this bill would do for not just inmates, but all citizens of Hawaii. I implore you to support this bill for the betterment of our state.



**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 4:36:11 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 4:50:06 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Vernelle Oku	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

Rehabilitation of prisoners would benefit both prisoners and the general public when they are released and have life skills that are vital for their survival and helpful in the community.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 6:04:24 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noela von Wiegandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

This Bill will help inmates prepare to be good Citizens.

I do have reservations about the mentally challenged inmates who came from broken homes though. I think that starting, this program should start with the basics of education. It should be mandatory that the inmates attain the GED requirements before any trade skills can occur. Many inmates never completed the basics of elementary thru high school requirements. Many came from abusive households as well. These programs should be fashioned like a ladder, start at the first step of the ladder and work their way up. This will plant the seeds of accomplishment as they go up the ladder to eventual success. It will improve their sense of self esteem and I think many inmates will see their academic growth they worked hard for. I also caution that the inmates with violent tendencies be helped more stringently and vigilantly. All in all this will help with overcrowding of our Correction facilities. Let's be very careful though. We cannot afford to make mistakes moving forward with this program.

Thank you very much.

Noela von Wiegandt

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 8:36:24 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marian Crislip	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1735 will give people the hope they need to grow confident, knowledgeable, and skilled upon re-entry into a highly demanding, competitive, market of workers. Going "back to school" to re-learn, review, and re-acquaint themselves with what they've learned previously and even learn something brand new is energizing and can instill a "can do" attitude, confidence that they will be ready to face the challenges and make decisions that come from a strong knowledge and experience base. These opportunities and the success they achieve, can instill pride, increase their self-esteem, and strengthen their self-worth.

Considering the expense, HB 1735 is priceless when you can see the benefits that are achieved in the lives of people who are re-entering the workforce. Please support the passing of this bill.

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 9:46:43 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cindy R Ajimine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Properly implemented with checks/assessments, has the potential to solve many problems including prison overcrowding and re-entry. Mahalo.

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 12:42:46 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Greg Misakian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1735.

Greg Misakian

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 9:10:35 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gary Shieds	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I am in strong support of this bill and will be providing verbal testimony.

STATE OF HAWAI‘I  
**OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**

**Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender, State of  
Hawai‘i to the House Committee on Corrections, Military, & Veterans**

February 6, 2024

H.B. 1735: RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAMS

Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender strongly supports H.B. 1735

We strongly support any efforts to expand education, counseling, and training programs for all incarcerated individuals. It is a common experience for incarcerated individuals to serve jail or prison time without a meaningful opportunity for self-improvement or options for successful re-entry in the community. The limited programs that do exist are often at capacity and do not adequately address the needs of the greater incarcerated population.

To meaningfully decrease the likelihood of recidivism, incarcerated individuals must reintegrate into the community with employment opportunities, life skills and societal support. If released from incarceration without such training and programming, individuals are drawn back to pre-existing circumstances that increase the chances of recidivism. Expansion of available programs and increased funding to enact additional programs and training opportunities is critical to the success of those who will be released. It also protects the community by decreasing the likelihood that these individuals will recidivate.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



**LATE**

**HB-1735**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 2:18:34 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorenn Walker	Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun and other committee members,

Mahalo for your work. Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ) is supports this measure.

HFRJ is a 40+ year old non-profit dedicated to improving our justice system. We have worked with people harmed by serious crime and injustice, with people who've caused harm, with the judiciary, other government agencies, non-profits, individuals, families, and communities. Numerous [peer reviewed articles about our work](#) have been published. We are frequently contacted by others nationally and internationally for assistance with evidence based reentry programs and policies.

This bill would mandate that Hawai'i's corrections department increase trianing oppourtunities for the incarcerated. The department of corrections should also apply the 2018 recommendations of the House Concurrent Resolution 85 Task Force on Prison Reform including increasing educational and training opportunities for the incarcerated. It is abundantly clear that people who have meaningful work and activities are likely to desist from crime and substance disorders (see: Shadd Maruna's *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives*, 2007). Having relationships with law abiding others also increases desistance chances, which mentoring programs can provide.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments concerning our testimony supporting this measure: [lorenn@hawaiifriends.or](mailto:lorenn@hawaiifriends.or) or (808) 218 3712.

Mahalo,

Lorenn Walker, JD, MPH

Director, HFRJ