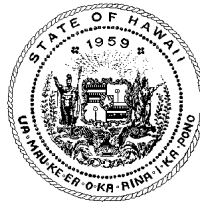


JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
KA 'OIHANA HO'OPALEKANA LEHULEHU
1177 Alakea Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
Deputy Director
Administration

Michael J. Hoffman
Acting Deputy Director
Corrections

William Oku
Acting Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 775
RELATING TO ESTABLISHING THE SOCIAL WORKERS
FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PILOT PROGRAM

by
Tommy Johnson, Director

House Committee on Human Services
Representative John M Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 2, 2023; 9:00 a.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 329 and Via Video Conference

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) provides comments on House Bill (HB) 775, which creates funding for five (5) social worker positions for a pilot project with the Department of Public Safety or its successor agency, the Department of Law Enforcement to allow for a social worker to assist law enforcement officers on calls where a subject's mental health or housing may be at issue.

The department respectfully recommends this measure be amended to align with the Department of Human Resources and Development's (DHRD) position classification system which has a correspondence job class identified as human services professional which is parallel to the classification of social worker. Therefore, is recommended that all references to social worker in this measure be amended to include the language "social worker and/or human service professional".

In addition, the department defers to the testimony submitted by the Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) as it relates to all other aspects and

House Committee on Human Services

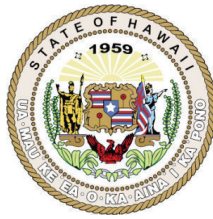
House Bill 775

February 2, 2023

challenges of implementation of the requirements of this measure as currently written. The department urges the legislature to consider the comments made by the DLE and to adopt that agency's recommendations on how to proceed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 775.

JOSH GREEN
GOVERNOR



JORDAN LOWE
DIRECTOR

MICHAEL S. VINCENT
Deputy Director
Administration

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
Ka 'Oihana Ho'opalekana Lehulehu
1177 Alakea Street
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(808) 587-2562

Vacant
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No.

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 775
RELATING TO ESTABLISHING THE
SOCIAL WORKERS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PILOT PROGRAM

Before the House Committee on Human Services

Thursday, February 2, 2023; 9:00 a.m.

State Capitol Conference Room 329

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) submits the following comments on House Bill 775.

This bill establishes a 5-year pilot program which requires social workers to accompany state law enforcement officers in responding to incidents where a person may be unsheltered, substance addicted, or mentally impaired.

The DLE supports appropriate intervention and support for our homeless, addicted, or mentally impaired members of our community who encounter our law enforcement officers. The DLE also support a combined integrated response with social services experts and law enforcement trying to intervene and provide support when circumstances permit. However, while the DLE supports the initiative, it is not prepared, equipped, or capable of managing and leading what is the real work that is the objective of this bill-namely, getting immediate quality help for those who need it the most. The DLE believes an appropriate social agency working with this segment of our community should be the lead with DLE participating in these efforts as that is the focus of their primary responsibility. Such an approach will allow the experts to develop and

DLE Testimony on House BILL 775
RELATING TO ESTABLISHING THE SOCIAL
WORKERS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PILOT PROGRAM
January 31, 2023
Page 2

tailor the response to the needs of the community while providing a pool of experts the DLE can call when they have a situation where the experts are needed.

Another concern with the bill is it appears to mandate that a social worker accompany law enforcement on these calls. Such a requirement is not feasible, or possible unless social workers are with the law enforcement officers throughout their shift. A better option is to have them on call to respond when needed which can be in anticipation of a need or during an encounter.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
 235 S. Beretania Street, 16th Floor
 HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
 (808) 587-4160

CHRISTIN M. JOHNSON
 OVERSIGHT COORDINATOR

COMMISSIONERS
HON. MICHAEL A. TOWN
 (ret.)
HON. RONALD IBARRA
 (ret.)
TED SAKAI
MARTHA TORNEY

TO: The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair
 The Honorable Terez Amato, Vice Chair
 House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Mark Patterson, Chair
 Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

SUBJECT: House Bill 775, Establishing the Social Workers for Public Safety Pilot Program
 Hearing: Thursday, February 2, 2023: 9:00 am
 State Capitol, Room 329

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) supports House Bill 775, relating to Establishing the Social Workers for Public Safety Pilot Program. This bill would require the Department of Public Safety or its successor agency to design and implement a five-year pilot program requiring social workers to accompany law enforcement officers responding to incidents where a person may be unsheltered, substance addicted, or mentally impaired.

HRS 353L requires that the HCSOC “[E]stablish maximum inmate population limits for each correctional system and formulate policies and procedures to prevent the inmate population from exceeding the capacity of each correctional facility.” One of the major factors in the overcrowding in our four Community Correctional Centers (CCC) is the frequent arrest and detention of persons who are unsheltered, or have substance use disorders, or who are mentally impaired, or any combination thereof. In carrying out their duties, law enforcement officers often have no alternative but to arrest, even for low level crimes. In our view, our jails have become the default service for the chronic cases involving this group. This contributes to the ongoing overcrowding at the Oahu CCC, Hawaii CCC, Maui CCC and Kauai CCC. These facilities do not have the physical facilities or staff to provide the services required.

HB 775 will provide an important resource of our State law enforcement officers and better outcomes for our community. WE urge you to pass this bill.

Should you have additional questions, the Oversight Coordinator, Christin Johnson, can be reached at 808-900-2200 or at christin.m.johnson@hawaii.gov. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SHOPO



STATE OF HAWAII ORGANIZATION OF POLICE OFFICERS

" A Police Organization for Police Officers Only "
Founded 1971

January 30, 2023

VIA ONLINE

The Honorable John M. Mizuno
Chair
The Honorable Terez Amato
Vice-Chair
House Committee on Human Services
Hawaii State Capitol, Rooms 402, 317
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **HB 775 – Establishing the social workers for public safety pilot program**

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice-Chair Amato, and Honorable Committee members:

I serve as the President of the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers (“SHOPO”) and write to you on behalf of our Union in **strong support** of HB 775 which calls for the creation of a five-year social workers for public safety program in the Department of Public Safety, or its successor agency. This bill will enhance community response to those in mental or behavioral health crisis by allowing trained social workers to accompany Department of Public Safety law enforcement officers on calls where the subject’s mental health or housing may be at issue.

As you are aware, our community is struggling to adequately respond to an unprecedented wave of individuals experiencing homelessness, mental health issues, and substance addiction. This struggle includes our police officers who are on the streets responding to calls involving individuals who are in a crisis beyond what our officers are trained or equipped to provide meaningful assistance. We support this bill as it offers critical social worker support to the Department of Public Safety on calls where the subject’s housing, mental health or substance abuse may be at issue and thus, rehabilitative assistance, and not just law enforcement response, would be of greater benefit to those individuals. The clear intent of this bill is to provide individuals in crises with a law enforcement response in tandem with needed rehabilitative assistance, thereby avoiding any potential miscommunication during law enforcement encounters that can put the individual, the officer, or the community at risk, and to help lower arrest, incarceration, and recidivism rates.

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The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair
The Honorable Terez Amato, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Human Services
Re: HB 775 – Establishing the social workers for public safety pilot program
January 30, 2023
SHOPO Testimony Page 2

Police officers regularly have to respond to calls involving an individual experiencing a mental or behavioral health crises, who is often struggling with rational decision making and clear communication. Law enforcement officers should not be the primary responders to matters involving mental illness, behavioral health and homelessness because they are not specifically trained for such encounters nor do they have the skill set and adequate resources to assist these individuals as compared to social workers, who have the training and expertise needed to provide rehabilitative assistance. Social workers, working hand in hand with law enforcement officers, can help with de-escalation of a crisis and can assist chronically unsheltered, mentally impaired, or substance addicted persons in accessing shelter, psychiatric care, drug abuse treatment or other social services.

For our community, it is imperative that emergency calls involving crisis intervention concerning mental illness, behavioral health and homelessness be addressed humanely and efficiently. Allowing social workers to accompany Department of Public Safety law enforcement officers on certain calls is one very positive step in that direction. It is our sincere hope that this program will prove to be effective and successful so that it can be expanded to our police officers.

We thank you for allowing us to be heard on this very important issue and we hope your committee will unanimously support HB775.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT “BOBBY” CAVACO
SHOPO President



HB775 Social Worker Counselor with Law Enforcement Pilot

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Thursday, Feb 2, 2023, 9:00:

HSAC Supports HB775:

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies.

This pilot program as well as others are needed to **get support to law enforcement to help them as well as the people in distress**, especially when so many people have mental health or substance abuse issues.

The role of social workers in law enforcement are to provide services to community residents¹:

- **Crisis intervention,**
- **Mediation,**
- **Referrals,**
- **Provision of training and consultation to police officers, and**
- **Mental health services to police officers and their families.**

One of the hidden values of having a mental health counselor help law enforcement is that many of the police that are dealing with crisis situations develop their own mental health challenges.²

- There is large movement nationally to recognize that **30% of law enforcement develop health conditions** including depression, PTSD, anxiety, sleep disorders and substance abuse disorders.
- They need the support to deal more effectively with crisis situations to safeguard their own mental health.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for questions.

¹ National Association of Social Workers NASW: New York City Chapter: Police Social Work
A Unique Area of Practice Arising from Law Enforcement Functions: George T. Patterson, Ph.D., ACSW, LCSW-R, Assistant Professor, Hunter College School of Social Work. July 2008 <https://www.naswnyc.org/page/77/Police-Social-Work.htm>

² SAMHSA: First Responders: Behavioral Health Concerns, Emergency Response and Trauma 2018
<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/dtac/supplementalresearchbulletin-firstresponders-may2018.pdf>



To: Committee on Human Services

Hearing Date/Time: Thursday 2.2.23 9:00 am

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 775

From: Heather Lusk, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

Dear Chair Mizuno, Viuce Chair Amato and Members of the Committee

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) supports HB 775 which would create a five-year pilot project which would support co-responding to behavioral health crisis with a law enforcement officer and a social worker. Research shows that people trained in mental health, crisis de-escalation and substance use are more effective at resolving crisis without adverse consequences. While Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is growing in Hawaii and has been adopted by all four county police departments, CIT has not been implemented with Public Safety.

HHHRC's mission is to *reduce harm, promote health, create wellness and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific*. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

I am a social worker and currently serve as the clinical lead for Honolulu CIT and hope that you will consider this measure to fund a pilot with law enforcement at the State level and we can continue to use lessons learned on the county level.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Heather Lusk, Executive Director, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair
Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair
February 2, 2023 Via Videoconference / Room 329

Testimony in Support for HB775 ESTABLISHING THE SOCIAL WORKERS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PILOT PROGRAM

The National Association of Social Workers – Hawai'i (NASW- HI) supports HB775, which creates a 5-year pilot program within the Department of Public Safety to require social workers to accompany and assist law enforcement in managing incidents involving unsheltered, substance addicted, and/or mentally impaired individuals.

This measure encourages the mental health community to build effective alliances, best practices, and effective interventions with stakeholders in public safety and public health.

This measure also comports with the NASW Code of Ethics; in particular our broad “Ethical Principles” through which the profession of social work expresses its core values of: **“service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.”**

To the extent those trained and credentialed as social workers under the NASW’s Code of Ethics are executing the functions of this pilot project, we believe it holds great promise for better outcomes for individuals, as well lower societal costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support.

Sincerely,

 MSW, LCSW

Sonja Bigalke-Bannan, MSW, LCSW
Executive Director,
National Association of Social Workers- Hawai'i Chapter

CHAIR OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE

H.B. 775

Thursday, February 2, 2023

9:00 A.M.

IN SUPPORT

I am testifying in favor of establishing the social workers for public safety pilot program.

Interprofessional collaboration is an effective approach that enables first responders to optimize the result of life-threatening circumstances with the public. Health professionals who can collaborate effectively to provide patient-centered care and enhance community health at a lower cost and with greater efficiency. The program permits police officers to bring social workers and mental health professionals to incidents to ascertain an individual with a mental health crisis. Then, law enforcement and social workers can determine whether a mental health facility or other help could address the needs and actions of an individual from every possible angle.

For example:

- Address the root causes of the crime compassionately and safely.
- Providing law enforcement officers with what they are asking for that is an imperative necessity while they serve and protect.
- Address the stress placed on first responders and the difficulty of recruiting and keeping officers, understanding the hardships and strains of a career in law enforcement.
- By mandating trauma-informed training for homicide investigators, enabling money for the Violent Crime Witness Protection Act, and establishing a grant program to develop tip hotlines or other victim and witness resources, this bill will address victims' rights and public safety holistically.

Interprofessional collaboration happens when experts from two or more human health services work together to facilitate effective interaction and strengthen local population health outcomes. By addressing the root causes of the crime, implement those professionals who serve and protect our community, pass Bill HB775 in favor our establishing the social workers for public safety pilot program.

D. Sales-Luis

HB-775

Submitted on: 1/31/2023 8:17:18 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alan Urasaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of this bill.

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato & Members of the Human Services Committee

I support HB 775 to establish the Social Workers for Public Safety Pilot Program. As a student of the MSW Program at UH Mānoa's Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health, I would like to state that I am testifying as an individual and my views do not represent that of my institution or field placement site.

I believe that as social work students, we are receiving valuable training in trauma-informed care and de-escalation in working with vulnerable populations. In my didactic trainings prior to being sent out to the H.O.M.E. Project (Homeless Outreach Medical Education), I learned a lot about how seemingly subtle cues such as our body language, body placement, tone, volume and choice of words can send very loud messages to these vulnerable populations.

Upon my third time at the H.O.M.E. Project as a part of the behavioral health team, I learned first-hand the importance of approaching and engaging with houseless individuals in a warm, open, transparent and compassionate manner. When I simply joined a volunteer to shadow the intake process, this individual became agitated and assumed I was another client cutting in front of him. The lesson my supervisor instilled in me with that encounter was to always greet and acknowledge the houseless individual and clearly explain what your role is and what you are here to do. We are also always told not to crowd clients and to be aware of our placement in relation to them. If they are sitting, we want to sit with them instead of standing ("towering") above them. If there are two or three of us staff members (and just one of the clients), we want to spread ourselves out so as to not crowd or surround the individual.

The medical students at the H.O.M.E. Project are also advised by our behavioral health team supervisor to always narrate what they will be doing (including taking their vitals, walking over to grab supplies, throwing things away, etc). This is advised because the vulnerable individuals who are houseless or have severe mental illnesses need to know what to expect. I understand that it is not often the case that law enforcement officers take the time to clearly explain to these vulnerable individuals what they are there to do. Thus, in their encounters with law enforcement, many houseless individuals get spooked or agitated because they do not know what to expect.

I believe that social workers can bring a lot of their training and interpersonal skills to the field of public safety. I am in strong support of HB775 and hope to see the positive impact this pilot program can have on our communities.

Respectfully,
Nana Clemons

HB-775

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 11:35:16 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Crystal Charkowski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Human Services Committee of the State of Hawai'i House of Representatives

In support of: HB 775 ESTABLISHING THE SOCIAL WORKERS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PILOT PROGRAM.

My name is Crystal Charkowski, and I am Masters of Social Work Student at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

I am providing testimony in support of this bill to establish a pilot program for a trained Social Worker to accompany police officers called to respond to the four report types listed in Bill 775.

Substance abuse, mental illness and homelessness put an individual experiencing these social problems in a chronic state of mental and physical stress. This stress can trigger behavior that is taxing on many of Hawai'i's social systems. Interaction with an authority figure, such as a police officer or firefighter, can escalate the stress response in the already impaired individual.

I live on the island of Hawai'i in Kailua-Kona and there is a large homeless population, many of which are currently experiencing problems with mental illness and/or substance use. I have interacted personally with several of these individuals in daily life and in my school practicum. I have also witnessed firsthand the difference tone, body language, and intention make in conversation with individuals experiencing crisis. No one wants to be the reason the police are called. The response to these calls can either escalate the situation and result in jail, hospital or in rare cases death or they can introduce individuals to the help they need. A response from a trained social worker and police officer to a report regarding one of these individuals can provide a safer environment for everyone involved: the individual experiencing the crisis, the social worker as they deescalate and provide treatment and services, and the police officer as they provide a safe environment.

I truly believe that Bill 775 and the partnership between the police department and social workers has the opportunity to positively affect our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Bill 775.

Crystal Charkowski

