
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAMS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that House Concurrent
2 Resolution No. 85, H.D. 2, S.D. 1 (2016), requested the
3 convening of a task force to make recommendations to the
4 legislature on ways to improve Hawaii's correctional system.
5 The final report of the task force was submitted to the
6 legislature in December 2018. According to the 2018 report,
7 "the State's correctional system is not producing acceptable,
8 cost-effective, or sustainable outcomes and needs immediate and
9 profound change." Prison populations have risen noticeably
10 since the 1980s, with Hawaii experiencing an eight hundred and
11 seventy per cent increase in prison populations between 1980 and
12 2018. This increase has had a disproportionate impact on native
13 Hawaiians, with the task force finding that native Hawaiians
14 make up forty per cent of the prison population but only twenty
15 per cent of the overall population in the State. Additionally,
16 prisons are failing to correct unwanted behavior, leading to
17 higher rates of recidivism.



1 The legislature further finds that the 2019 Recidivism
2 Update to the 2002 Hawaii Recidivism Baseline Study shows that
3 nearly fifty-four per cent of criminals in Hawaii are repeat
4 offenders. The State correctional system's high rate of
5 recidivism, and the corresponding overall increase in prison
6 populations since the 1980s, places a serious financial burden
7 on local communities. A 2020 study evaluating the corrections
8 system in Hawaii estimates that it costs the State approximately
9 \$72,000 to incarcerate an inmate for one year. By lowering
10 recidivism rates, the State could save significant amounts of
11 money that it could invest into other programs, such as
12 education, infrastructure, or social services.

13 The legislature further finds that offering extensive and
14 high-quality educational and vocational programs to inmates is
15 effective in reducing rates of recidivism and the overall cost
16 of the correctional system.

17 The legislature further finds that inmate participation in
18 mentorship reentry programs translates to higher rates of
19 employment and lower rates of recidivism. According to a
20 Public/Private Ventures study, inmates who participated in
21 mentorship programs were more than twice as likely to find a job



1 after release than inmates who did not. The same study found
2 that one year after release, participants who were mentored were
3 thirty-five per cent less likely to recidivate than inmates who
4 were not mentored.

5 The purpose of this Act is to:

- 6 (1) Encourage inmates to participate in correctional
7 educational programs and vocational training;
- 8 (2) Increase the quality and quantity of correctional
9 mentorship, counseling, educational, and vocational
10 training programs available to interested inmates;
- 11 (3) Allow inmates to earn an income and engage in
12 supervised apprenticeship training to obtain licensure
13 and increase marketability and workforce readiness
14 upon the completion of their sentencing; and
- 15 (4) Appropriate funds to expand model programs to include
16 more quality educational and vocational programs.

17 SECTION 2. Section 353H-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
18 amended to read as follows:

19 "[~~§~~§353H-4~~§~~] **Model programs; department of corrections**
20 **and rehabilitation.** Subject to funding by the legislature, the
21 department of corrections and rehabilitation shall enhance the



1 State's comprehensive offender reentry system by developing
2 model programs designed to reduce recidivism and promote
3 successful reentry into the community. Components of the model
4 programs shall include but are not limited to:

5 (1) Earn and learn programs. The department shall expand
6 existing career training opportunities and work
7 furlough programs to include earn and learn programs.
8 For purposes of this paragraph, "earn and learn
9 programs" means programs that allow eligible offenders
10 to participate in supervised apprenticeships to allow
11 offenders to work toward licensure while earning an
12 income;

13 [~~(1)~~] (2) Highly skilled staff who are experienced in
14 working with offender reentry programs;

15 [~~(2)~~] (3) Individualized case management and a full
16 continuum of care to ensure successful reentry;

17 [~~(3)~~] (4) Life skills development workshops, including
18 budgeting, money management, nutrition, and exercise;
19 development of self-determination through education;
20 employment training; special education for the
21 learning disabled; social, cognitive, communication,



1 and life skills training; and appropriate treatment
2 programs, including substance abuse and mental health
3 treatment;

4 [~~(4)~~] (5) Parenting and relationship building classes. The
5 department shall institute policies that support
6 family cohesion and family participation in offenders'
7 transition to the community, and, where possible,
8 provide geographical proximity of offenders to their
9 children and families; [~~and~~]

10 [~~(5)~~] (6) Ongoing attention to building support for
11 offenders from communities, community agencies, and
12 organizations[~~;~~];

13 (7) Programs that encourage offenders without a high
14 school diploma or equivalency certificate to obtain a
15 high school equivalency certificate while incarcerated
16 by matching offenders with an advisor, mentor, or
17 guidance counselor to support the offenders'
18 understanding of incarceration's impact on family,
19 emotions, society, and the self;



- 1 (8) Programs that encourage eligible offenders to attend
2 community college or university by teaching offenders
3 the benefits of a college education;
- 4 (9) Programs that shift the focus of career training
5 programs to relevant and useful opportunities,
6 highlight job prospects and benefits that offenders
7 can obtain after completion of specific career
8 training programs, and teach offenders about the
9 benefits of stable employment beyond incarceration and
10 its benefits on themselves, family, and society;
- 11 (10) Programs that work with non-profit organizations and
12 the business community to secure job positions for
13 offenders that have completed necessary career
14 training programs and have the required
15 qualifications; and
- 16 (11) Programs that compel offenders convicted of a felony
17 to undergo emotional, academic, and behavioral
18 mentoring or counseling by recommending that offenders
19 be granted parole or early release upon completion of
20 the program."



H.B. NO. 1342

1 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
3 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the
4 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
5 2026-2027 for the department of corrections and rehabilitation
6 to expand existing model programs to provide more educational
7 and vocational training opportunities for interested offenders.

8 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
9 of corrections and rehabilitation for the purposes of this Act.

10 SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
11 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

12 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

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INTRODUCED BY: *Gerron M. Shinn*
JAN 23 2025



H.B. NO. 1342

Report Title:

Recidivism; Offender Re-entry Programs; Appropriation

Description:

Expands programming and training for the comprehensive offender re-entry program under the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to reduce the rate of recidivism and increase inmate marketability and workforce readiness. Appropriates funds.

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