

JON N. IKENAGA  
PUBLIC DEFENDER

**DEFENDER COUNCIL**  
1130 NORTH NIMITZ HIGHWAY  
SUITE A-254  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

**HONOLULU OFFICE**  
1130 NORTH NIMITZ HIGHWAY  
SUITE A-254  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

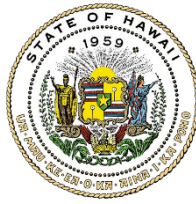
**APPELLATE DIVISION**  
TEL. No. (808) 586-2080

**DISTRICT COURT DIVISION**  
TEL. No. (808) 586-2100

**FAMILY COURT DIVISION**  
TEL. No. (808) 586-2300

**FELONY DIVISION**  
TEL. No. (808) 586-2200

**FACSIMILE**  
(808) 586-2222



STATE OF HAWAII  
**OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**

HAYLEY Y. C. CHENG  
ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER

**HILO OFFICE**  
275 PONAHAHAWAI STREET  
SUITE 201  
HILO, HAWAII 96720  
TEL. No. (808) 974-4571  
FAX No. (808) 974-4574

**KONA OFFICE**  
75-1000 HENRY STREET  
SUITE #209  
KAILUA-KONA HI 96740  
TEL. No. (808) 327-4650  
FAX No. (808) 327-4651

**KAUAI OFFICE**  
3060 EWA STREET  
SUITE 206  
LIHUE, HAWAII 96766  
TEL. No. (808) 241-7128  
FAX No. (808) 274-3422

**MAUI OFFICE**  
81 N. MARKET STREET  
WAILUKU, HAWAII 96793  
TEL. No. (808) 984-5018  
FAX No. (808) 984-5022

**March 16, 2025**

**S.B. No. 224, SD1: RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION**

**Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:**

The Office of the Public Defender **supports SB 224, SD1**. This bill requires the Department of Corrections to inform incarcerated individuals about the availability of departmental assistance to obtain civil identification cards and provide that assistance upon request.

Upon release, incarcerated individuals already face numerous barriers to successful community reintegration. Lack of identification compounds those barriers and severely limits one's ability to secure housing, government assistance, employment, and access to financial institutions. Lack of identification is often the first step towards failure after release.

“Burdensome documentation requirements often mean a person needs one form of ID (such as a birth certificate) to get another ID (such as a driver's license). When someone is jailed or incarcerated, many of their belongings, including IDs, are taken from them, and these may not be returned upon release. In some cases, jails or prisons will intentionally destroy inmates' personal property, including IDs. Depending on how long a person is incarcerated, even if their IDs are returned to them, the IDs may have long since expired and no longer be valid... A lack of ID limits access to essential services, such as social safety net programs that can support successful reentry, such as food assistance (e.g., SNAP) or cash assistance... Some states and public programs already ban formerly incarcerated people from accessing these key services, limiting their chances at successful reentry—in states or for

programs where this is not the case, a lack of valid ID poses another obstacle to accessing these essential supports.”<sup>1</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mapresearch.org/file/ID-info-formerly-incarcerated-people.pdf>

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**  
**E HUIKALA A MA'EMA'E NŌ**  
235 S. Beretania Street, 16th Floor  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
(808) 587-4160

MARK PATTERSON  
CHAIR

CHRISTIN M. JOHNSON  
OVERSIGHT COORDINATOR

COMMISSIONERS  
HON. R. MARK BROWNING (ret.)

HON. RONALD IBARRA (ret.)

MARTHA TORNEY

HON. MICHAEL A. TOWN (ret.)

TO: The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair  
The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Mark Patterson, Chair  
Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 224, Senate Draft 1, Relating to Identification  
Hearing: Tuesday, March 18, 2025; 2:15 p.m.  
State Capitol, Room 325

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) **supports** Senate Bill 224, Senate Draft 1, Relating to Identification, which will not only affect the timeliness in which people in custody are *informed* of departmental assistance in obtaining applicable identification documents, but also the timeliness in which they *receive assistance* in obtaining their identification documents.

First and foremost, the HCSOC acknowledges the Department's ongoing collaboration with the DMV and the efforts to expand identification processing capabilities at the Halawa Correctional Facility (HCF) and the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC). While the DCR has made progress in collaborating with agencies and facilitating access to identification documents, the Commission found that the Department has not fully met the statutory requirements under §353H-32. Significant gaps remain in informing people in custody about available assistance, prioritizing support for those within one year of release, adhering to prescribed timelines, and providing forms in the individual's primary language.

The Commission found that even though legislative funds have been allocated for this purpose, the DCR reported that, of the 10,580 individuals released since 2022, only 150 received identification cards with DCR assistance, and just 32 of these were provided at no cost. A total of approximately \$61,800 was spent on this identification effort, with \$1,280 directly funding identification card issuance and the remaining \$60,000 allocated to infrastructure.

In addressing §353H-32(b), the DCR has made progress through an MOU with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to assist people in custody in obtaining Social Security cards. Despite this progress, further collaboration with federal, state, and county agencies is needed to streamline access to birth certificates and other relevant identification documents. The MOU limits eligibility to those with confirmed release dates within 120 days, excluding individuals with less than six weeks remaining and

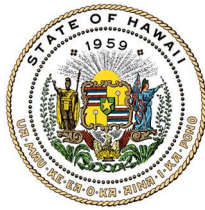
parolees who typically receive only two weeks' notice. This approach does not align with the statutory requirement to assist people in custody *within the one-year period prior to parole or release*. Again, the HCSOC does not recommend discontinuing the use of the SSA MOU, but rather finding additional ways for expansion. Additionally, DCR does not consistently inform people in custody about the availability of this assistance, leaving a statutory obligation unmet.

Ensuring individuals receive their identification cards upon release from correctional facilities significantly impacts a formerly incarcerated person's ability to reintegrate into society by providing access to basic necessities like housing, employment, and social services, which are often inaccessible without proper identification. This ultimately impacts the overall population by potentially reducing recidivism rates and promoting successful reentry.

This low number of identification cards issued, especially those provided at no cost, suggests the need for a more effective and efficient strategy, as providing identification is essential for successful reentry. This includes starting the identification application process upon admission to custody, allowing sufficient time to gather required documents and ensure successful identification issuance before release.

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

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



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
AND REHABILITATION**  
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalua 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 SENATE BILL 224, SENATE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION.

by  
Tommy Johnson

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 18, 2025, 2:15 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & via Videoconference

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

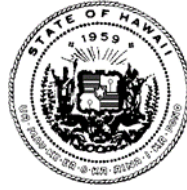
The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 224, Senate Draft (SD) 1, which proposes DCR to collaborate with other agencies to inform and assist inmates in obtaining identifying documents as soon as practicable, or within established time frames.

As part of the intake process, DCR notifies and, with the inmate's consent, assists inmates with obtaining civil ID Cards, replacement birth certificates and/or social security cards, as needed. DCR obtains social security cards through its Memorandum of Agreement with the office of the Social Security Administration. DCR is also exploring the possibility of including assistance with renewing inmates' Hawai'i State driver's licenses prior to expiration, while incarcerated.

DCR is working with the City and County to update the current State satellite machine at the Halawa Correctional Facility (HCF), as well as secure additional satellite identification machines for other DCR facilities to supplement its efforts and increase the number of inmates DCR assists.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of SB 224, SD 1.

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



RYAN I. YAMANE  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWE LAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 17, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 224 SD 1 – RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION.**

Hearing: March 18, 2025, 2:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure, defers to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and provides clarification. DHS clarifies that identification documents such as birth certificates are used to access social services, including Medicaid; however, a government-issued identification *card* is not a current requirement. Additionally, the DHS Med-QUEST Division (MQD) accepts self-attested information from applicants, removing barriers to applying. MQD only requires documents if the attested information does not match available data sources.

**PURPOSE:** This bill requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, in collaboration with various agencies and upon request of the inmates, to assist inmates in obtaining the inmates' civil identification card, birth certificate, social security card, and other relevant identification necessary for successful reentry into society, as soon as practicable. Requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to initiate the process of obtaining identifying documents for inmates released to work furlough, extended furlough, or community

placement programs, by providing the forms necessary for the inmate to obtain civil identification cards and other identifying documents to the inmate as soon as practicable. (SD1)

The Committees on Judiciary and Ways and Means amended this measure by requiring the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to provide assistance to inmates in obtaining identification cards and other identifying documents even if the Department fails to meet the timelines established by this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 224 SD 1**  
**RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION**

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 18, 2025

2:15PM

Room 325

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Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB 224 SD 1 which requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, in collaboration with various agencies and upon request of the inmates, to assist inmates in obtaining their civil identification card, birth certificate, social security card, and other relevant identification necessary for successful reentry into society, as soon as practicable but at least one year before the inmate's parole or release date; provided that the department shall assist inmates in obtaining a civil identification card even if the department fails to meet the timelines established by this measure.

OHA strongly supports policies which reduce harmful psychological, social, cultural, and economic impacts on pa‘ahao, their ‘ohana, and the greater Hawaiian community. Native Hawaiians continue to be disproportionately impacted by Hawai‘i’s criminal justice system, comprising approximately 37% of the state’s correctional facilities, while representing only 21% of the total state population.<sup>1</sup> Ensuring those who have served their sentence receive their identifying documents in a timely manner, meaning before their release, is important to reducing recidivism by enabling these individuals to secure housing, apply for jobs, and travel back to their homes if incarcerated out of state.

SB 224 SD 1 is a commonsense measure which helps to set individuals leaving prison for success upon their release. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs urges this committee to **PASS SB 224 SD 1**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

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<sup>1</sup> “Creating Better Outcomes, Safer Communities – Final Report of the House Concurrent Resolution 85 Task Force on Prison Reform to the Hawai‘i Legislature – 2019 Regular Session,” HCR 85 Task Force; Legislative Reference Bureau (December 2018) at p. xiii, [https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HCR-85\\_task\\_force\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HCR-85_task_force_final_report.pdf)



# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / [kat.caphi@gmail.com](mailto:kat.caphi@gmail.com)

*Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor*



## COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Representative David Tarnas, Chair

Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

Room 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

2:15 PM

## STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB 224 SD1 - IDENTIFICATION

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai'i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 3,720 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars<sup>1</sup> and under the "care and custody" of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as of March 10, 2025. We are always mindful that 936 - 49.3% - of Hawai'i's male prison population (1,895) are serving their sentences abroad -- thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates this opportunity to share our strong support for SB 224 SD1. The law requiring identification for people being released from incarceration passed in 2017 and 8 years later, DCR is still making excuses for now issuing identification documents to those being released. WHY? The Waikiki Health Center Pu'u honua Project seems to be able to do this for those reentering the community with no problem.

The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission testified that "...even though funds have been allocated for this purpose, the DCR reported that of the **10,580 individuals released since 2022, only 150 received identification cards with DCR assistance, and just 32 of these were provided at no cost. A total of approximately \$61,800 was spent on this identification effort, with \$1,280 directly funding identification card issuance and the remaining \$60,000 allocated to infrastructure."**

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<sup>1</sup> DCR Weekly Population Report, March 10, 2025

<https://dcr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2025-03-10.pdf>

This bill mandates that DCR initiate the process instead of waiting for a person to ask for help.

The lack of identification documents has been a huge barrier for our people transitioning from incarceration back to their communities. It is shameful that Hawai'i has been releasing people with no identification, no money, and virtually no hope. This is a state-erected barrier to successful reentry.

In order for people to successfully transition from institutional life to community they need, at the very minimum, identification documents so that they can find housing, secure employment, open a bank account, cash a check, register to vote, and even to get a library card!

After being isolated from the community for many years, we doubt that a person even knows what to ask for or knows what documents are needed to find employment, secure housing, open a bank account, and to seek healthcare.

Here's a short story about a man who was incarcerated for 10 years, many of those in Saguaro - the contracted corporate prison in Eloy, Arizona. He was brought back to Hawai'i and released from Halawa at 8 or 9 pm. He had no money and no identification. Luckily someone let him use their cellphone and he called me.

I advised him to find a 24-hour internet café and to call me at 6am the next morning. This man walked from Halawa to Waikiki and he called me in the morning.

I gave him directions to my house so he would have a safe place to stay until I could find him a halfway house.

This is just one story of thousands about people being released with nothing. What do we expect to happen when a person is released at night with no resources?

To put a finer point on this, the community pays dearly when people are released without proper identification. The lack of proper identification can lead people to illegal activities because they cannot secure employment and this can lead to houselessness since identification is required in order to secure housing.

Community Alliance on Prisons loves that the committees amended this measure **REQUIRING** DCR to assist people in obtaining identification cards and other identifying documents and we hope that this committee supports successful reentry for those being released from incarceration and coming home to their communities.

Mahalo nui!

# KAWAIILOA

## Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i

March 18, 2025

House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Hearing Time: 2:15 PM

Location: State Capitol Conference Room 325

Re: SB224 SD1, Relating to identification

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i hui, we are writing in **strong support of SB224 SD1, relating to identification**. This bill requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, in collaboration with various agencies and upon request of the inmates, to assist inmates in obtaining the inmates' civil identification card, birth certificate, social security card, and other relevant identification necessary for successful reentry into society, as soon as practicable. The bill also requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to initiate the process of obtaining identifying documents for inmates released to work furlough, extended furlough, or community placement programs, by providing the forms necessary for the inmate to obtain civil identification cards and other identifying documents to the inmate as soon as practicable. Previous committees have amended this measure by requiring the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to assist inmates in obtaining identification cards and other identifying documents even if the Department fails to meet the timelines established by this measure.

For many incarcerated individuals, a lack of proper identification is a significant barrier to reentry into society. Without these essential documents, they face difficulties accessing employment, housing, healthcare, and other critical services. By requiring the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to proactively assist inmates with obtaining identification before release, this bill addresses a fundamental issue that often impedes reintegration. The requirement to initiate this process for inmates participating in furlough or community placement programs is particularly important. These programs are designed to help individuals transition back into society, and ensuring they have the necessary identification aligns with the programs' goals of fostering independence and reducing reliance on social safety nets.

Importantly, the amendment proactively guarantees that this valuable assistance is upkept regardless of administrative impediment. This amendment positively impacts inmates, ensuring that their reentry process is not unnecessarily burdened by departmental delay or failure.

Opportunity for 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 homelessness 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 SB224 SD1.**

1099 Alakea Street, Suite 2530 | Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 | (808) 447-1840

**SB-224-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 11:52:08 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Faccenda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure

**SB-224-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 3:08:29 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carla Allison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB224 SD1. This bill is crucial for the successful transition of folx from incarceration back to their communities.

**SB-224-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 3:27:48 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and JHA Committee Members,

As a local citizen concerned with fairness, I write in strong support of SB224 SD1, which would increase access to necessary documents for successful reintegration of people back into their communities after release from jail or prison.

If we truly expect those who have served their time to participate in our local communities, we must consider systems that facilitate, rather than obstruct, connections to care and services. Without ID, a person cannot find housing, secure employment, cash a check, open a bank account, register to vote, or even get a library card.

As such, this bill requires the state to initiate the process since a person incarcerated for many years may not know what documents they will need to reintegrate back to their community. Sadly, access to these documents after release is lacking. DCR reported that since 2022, only 150 persons received identification cards with DCR assistance – and only 32 were provided at no cost.

Let us ensure that those we hope to rebuild connections are not hamstrung by our very own state.

With thanks,

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

Makiki, HI

**SB-224-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 10:47:36 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Polk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs.

Please pass SB224SD1. Several years ago the legislature passed a law requiring the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitations to provide all people released from prison with an ID. The department responded by giving each person a prison ID which was useless when they were released.

Rehabilitation is close to impossible for people released without a State ID. The department's foot-dragging has been very costly in dollars, as well as in the damage to those released and their families. Please be sure that this bill **REQUIRES A STATE ID** so that the department can begin to meet its purpose.

If necessary, DCR can transport people to the offices that provide those IDs (after all,they can transport people to court and to the hospital,so this is not impossible.)

**SB-224-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 7:14:35 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stand in Support



**SB-224-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 9:26:29 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

KĀKO‘O au i kēia pila! I SUPPORT this bill.

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i