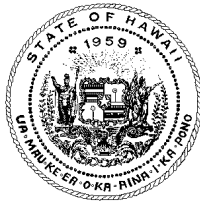


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



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 1769
RELATING TO CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.

by
Tommy Johnson, Director
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

House Committee on Public Safety
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 11, 2026; 8:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 411 & via Videoconference

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) opposes House Bill (HB) 1769, which seeks to require DCR to reduce the number of inmates housed at private out-of-state correctional institutions by 25% no later than July 1, 2029, and by 50% no later than July 1, 2031, without regard to DCR's in-state population for male convicted felons or DCR's capacity and/or ability to appropriately house, treat, and care for the affected committed felons. This measure also seeks requires DCR to submit reports to the Legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of the regular sessions of 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, and 2032 on actions taken to fulfill the requirements outlined in this measure.

DCR understands the intent of HB 1769 to return committed felons incarcerated in private Mainland facilities to Hawai'i. DCR shares the concerns raised about housing inmates in facilities far from home and would have returned the inmates long ago, but for the lack of facilities in which to house, care for, and treat them, including appropriate rehabilitative programs. Therefore, DCR cannot agree with this proposal, as there is currently no space available in our only male medium security prison (Halawa

Correctional Facility - HCF). The HCF has a design capacity of 496 offenders. However, at present there are 818 convicted male felons housed at that facility, which is 165% of its designed capacity. Currently there are 799 convicted male felons being housed at the Saguaro Correctional Center in Eloy, AZ.

It should be noted that DCR does not have the authority to turn away offenders sentenced to jail (1 year or less), or prison (1 year and 1 day or more), by courts, nor those re-sentenced by the courts from probation to prison terms. Likewise, DCR is required to accept all parole and probation violators, where the court or the Hawai'i Paroling Authority (HPA) have issued a warrant of arrest that has been executed. Therefore, DCR has no way of knowing what its population will be until they arrive at its doorstep.

For example, at present, the Judiciary has approximately 11,000 offenders on probation supervision statewide. If only 10% of the sentenced felony probationers (approximately 1,100) were re-sentenced to prison, the State's correctional system, which is already severely strained with insufficient capacity, to house all our current inmates in Hawai'i facilities, would be completely overwhelmed. It should also be noted that the Judiciary may have a substantial backlog of felony level criminal trials whereby hundreds of individuals could be convicted and sentenced to prison, some of which are sentenced felony probationers facing revocation and re-sentencing to prison.

To house these offenders located in Hawai'i who may be ordered into DCR's correctional facilities, there are only eight (8) jails and prisons, which are old, manpower-intensive, and constantly in need of major costly repairs. DCR has previously pointed out the age and limited capacities of its facilities in the state. Yet, despite its efforts, DCR has been largely unsuccessful for decades in gaining the support necessary to upgrade or even substantially refurbish our facilities.

Because DCR's correctional facility's medium custody level beds are currently filled, to return the 799 male inmates currently housed at Saguaro Correctional Center in Eloy, AZ, to Hawai'i will require a new medium security prison. DCR estimates the cost to build such a facility in Hawai'i to be between \$800 and \$900 million, depending on the

design, programming space and other costs. In addition, the annual cost to operate and manage such a facility is estimated to be \$45 - \$55 million and will require additional staffing of 350 – 450 (80% Uniformed and 20% Non-Uniformed) to operate it.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 1769.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1769
RELATING TO CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES
Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Palekana Lehulehu
Hawai'i State Capitol

Pepeluali 11, 2026

8:30 AM

Lumi 411

Aloha e Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, a me Members of Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Palekana Lehulehu:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB1769** which requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to incrementally reduce the number of individuals incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional facilities, and to report regularly on DCR's progress bringing pa'ahao home.

Native Hawaiians make up the highest percentage of people incarcerated in out-of-state facilities.¹ Incarcerating pa'ahao thousands of miles from home separates them from 'ohana, culture, and 'āina. Geographic separation profoundly intensifies cultural disconnection and family disruption and can undermine culturally grounded rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

OHA recognizes that in-state facility capacity is limited. At the same time, a substantial portion of people in custody are held pretrial or are primarily impacted by substance use and mental health needs. These realities highlight that bringing home our pa'ahao requires continued investment in diversion, treatment, reentry support, and fair-sentencing measures that safely reduce correctional populations over time. Accordingly, OHA has consistently supported legislation that advances reentry services, treatment, diversion, and proportional sentencing, and has discouraged overly punitive approaches that increase prison and jail populations without improving public safety. HB1769's phased reduction timeline aligns with this approach by pairing population reduction goals with practical time for capacity planning and system reform.

Reliance on private, out-of-state facilities also reduces transparency and public oversight. A structured, incremental reduction framework with regular legislative reporting promotes accountability and a transition toward correctional practices that focus on rehabilitation and reentry not warehousing. For these reasons, OHA respectfully urges this Committee to **PASS HB1769**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure.

¹ Office of Hawaiian Affairs, *The Disparate Impact of Native Hawaiians in the Criminal Justice System* (2010), available at http://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ir_final_web_rev.pdf

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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

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

Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor



COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair

Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

8:30 am

Room 411 and VIDEOCONFERENCE

STRONG SUPPORT with AMENDMENT FOR HB 1769 - REDUCING THE NUMBER OF OUR PEOPLE EXILED TO PRISONS OUTSIDE OF HAWAII

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto 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 almost three decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 3,654 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars¹ and under the "care and custody" of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on February 2, 2026. We are always mindful that 799 – 43% of Hawai'i's imprisoned male population 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 the opportunity to express our **strong support for HB 1769** that requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of individuals incarcerated in ~~private~~ CORPORATE, out-of-state correctional institutions and reports to the Legislature. We respectfully request that the bill be amended to include the following amendment

¹ DCR Weekly Population Report, February 2, 2026

dcr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2026-02-02.pdf

AMENDMENT -Page 4, Section 3:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation shall submit a report to the legislature **and the Hawai`i Correctional System Oversight Commission** no later than twenty days prior to convening of the regular sessions of 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, and 2032 on its actions and progress in meeting the reduction in the number of committed felons incarcerated in ~~private~~ **corporate**, out-of-state correctional institutions as required by this Act. **This report shall be posted semi-annually on the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's website.**

Please note that while the number of Hawai`i people exiled to Saguaro Correctional Center in Eloy, Arizona are posted in the DCR Weekly Population Reports, the number of our friends, family, and neighbors serving sentences in other prisons (Western Interstate Corrections Compact prisons and/or other state prisons) are NOT reported. Community Alliance on Prisons wants to make sure that these individuals are not forgotten.

Below are the number of people serving time in out-of-state prisons as of September 30, 2024 reported to us from the Hawai`i Correctional System Oversight Commission that they accessed from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:

ARIZONA	4
CALIFORNIA	2
COLORADO	4
CONNECTICUT	1
FLORIDA	1
INDIANA	1
NEW MEXICO	6
UTAH	2
VIRGINIA	3

FEDERAL PRISONS .. 30

The total number of our people serving time in out-of-state contract prisons or prisons in other states as of 9.30.24 was 25 Hawai`i individuals and when the 30 Hawai`i incarcerated persons serving sentences in federal prisons are included, this brings the total number of Hawai`i people exiled to federal or out-of-state and

compact prisons to 55 of our friends, family, and neighbors serving time far from home.

When we add the 799 individuals in Saguaro and the 55 individuals in federal and out-of-state and prisons that brings the total to 854 people exiled by the state far, far from their families and loved ones and from their communities in Hawai`i.

This is why it is imperative that we never forget our people serving time so far from home. We support this bill to not only reduce these populations, but mandate transparency and accountability by reporting the number of people serving time in these federal and out-of-state and compact prisons – where contact with loved ones is minimal at best. These are our people and it is incumbent upon the state to monitor what is happening to them at these facilities.

Community Alliance on Prisons has been appalled at the lack of concern for – and even contact with our people serving time at these institutions from DCR. They are truly the forgotten by the department. Community Alliance on Prisons will never forget them!

We urge the committee to support HB 1769 as at least an initial attempt to abandon the contract with Core Civic for this ‘temporary’ solution to overcrowding that has been ongoing for 30 years. It is shameful that Hawai`i refuses to take care of all of our people who are incarcerated by the Hawai`i government.

We implore the committee to pass HB 1769 with the suggested amendment in the interest of transparency and accountability!

Mahalo for opportunity to share our mana`o and our deep concern for our incarcerated people.

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 Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair
House Committee on Public Safety

FROM: Mark Patterson, Chair
Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission

SUBJECT: House Bill 1769, Relating to Correctional Facilities
Hearing: Wednesday, February 11, 2026; 8:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 411

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) submits testimony in **support** of House Bill 1769, relating to correctional facilities, which requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of individuals incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions.

Housing individuals in custody in out-of-state private facilities presents significant challenges and risks that make it an ineffective and harmful approach. First, it separates people from their families, legal support, and community connections, which are critical for emotional well-being, rehabilitation, and successful reintegration. This isolation can exacerbate mental health issues and increase the likelihood of recidivism.

Second, out-of-state facilities often operate under different regulatory and oversight standards, reducing transparency and accountability. This can lead to inconsistent care, inadequate medical and mental health services, and higher vulnerability to abuse or neglect. Out of state private institutions also have their own policies and procedures that do not align with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Third, private facilities are driven by profit motives, which can create perverse incentives to cut costs at the expense of safety, programming, and humane conditions.

Bringing people back home allows them to remain connected to their support networks and culture, receive oversight consistent with local standards, access appropriate services, and participate in programs that genuinely support rehabilitation and reentry. Housing individuals closer to their communities promotes safety, accountability, and long-term success for both the individuals and the broader community.

Should you have additional questions, the Oversight Coordinator, Christin Johnson, can be reached at 808-849-3580 or at christin.m.johnson@hawaii.gov. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1769

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 8:55:23 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Ohana Unity Party & Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony in ****STRONG SUPPORT**** of HB1769 Relating to Correctional Facilities

Aloha Chair(s) and Members of the Committees,

My name is Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM, Chairman of the Ohana Unity Party, representing the Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands. As a passionate advocate for justice reform, the protection of Native Hawaiian rights, family unity, cultural rehabilitation, and the advancement of self-sovereignty for our lāhui, I submit this testimony in ****STRONG SUPPORT**** of HB1769.

This transformative bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce reliance on private, out-of-state correctional institutions—defined as for-profit or public-private partnership facilities outside Hawai‘i—by mandating a 25% reduction in committed felons housed there by July 1, 2029, and a 50% reduction by July 1, 2031. It also compels annual reports to the Legislature on progress, ensuring transparency and accountability. Hawai‘i's over-reliance on mainland private prisons has caused profound harm: separating incarcerated individuals from ‘ohana, cultural practices, language, and community support systems essential for true rehabilitation and successful reentry.

This practice disproportionately affects Native Hawaiians, who remain overrepresented in the correctional system due to historical and systemic inequities, exacerbating intergenerational trauma and barriers to pono living. HB1769 shifts toward a corrections model centered on treatment, rehabilitation, community-based alternatives, and cultural reconnection—aligning with constitutional values and the public trust duty to foster healing rather than profit-driven isolation. Here are numbered, compelling reasons why the Committees should support and advance HB1769:

1. ****Reduces Harm to ‘Ohana and Cultural Connections**** Incarceration thousands of miles away severs family ties, prevents regular visitation, and blocks participation in cultural, spiritual, and rehabilitative programs rooted in Hawaiian values. Bringing individuals closer to home supports family reunification, cultural healing, and reduced recidivism through stronger support networks.

2. ****Addresses Disproportionate Impact on Native Hawaiians**** Native Hawaiians face systemic over-incarceration, with private out-of-state placements compounding inequities by removing access to culturally appropriate services, language immersion, and traditional practices vital for rehabilitation. This bill begins to rectify these injustices, honoring protections under Article XII, Section 7 of the Hawai'i State Constitution for traditional and customary rights.

3. ****Promotes Rehabilitation Over Profit-Driven Incarceration**** Private, for-profit facilities prioritize cost-cutting and shareholder returns over humane treatment and evidence-based rehabilitation. Reducing their use allows investment in in-state programs focused on mental health, substance treatment, education, vocational training, and restorative justice—proven to lower recidivism and build safer communities.

4. ****Enhances Accountability and Transparency**** The bill's requirement for annual progress reports to the Legislature (for sessions through 2032) ensures measurable steps toward reduction targets, public oversight, and data-driven adjustments—preventing indefinite reliance on out-of-state placements.

5. ****Advances Self-Sovereignty and Pono Justice**** Ending dependence on mainland private prisons empowers Hawai'i to control its own correctional system, prioritize local resources for our people, and reduce external profiteering from incarceration. This fosters greater self-determination, cultural resilience, and abundance ('āina momona) for future generations by treating justice as healing rather than exile. HB1769 takes effect upon approval, with phased targets providing realistic timelines for implementation, capacity building, and community alternatives.

It reflects growing consensus on criminal justice reform, including calls from advocates, oversight commissions, and communities impacted by mass incarceration. I urge the Committees to pass HB1769 unanimously and forward it swiftly. Let's bring our people home—closer to 'ohana, culture, healing, and the path to true sovereignty.

Mahalo nui loa for your kuleana in advancing justice, equity, and rehabilitation for Hawai'i's people.

Sincerely, Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I.
Ohana Unity Party, Chairman www.Ohanaunityparty.com Presidentbillionaire@gmail.com

Facebook @Keiki'okalani Instagram @Ohanaunityparty IG @Legendarybillionaire X
@Ohanaunityparty X @AmericanpartyOG Support The Channel, Like, Subscribe, Donate
YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/@theXXXfiles> Venmo @Presidentbillionaire
CashApp \$ShelbyBillionaire BTC Wallet 1sRfKDphW18hojoyTQVy9qQVSUtQgahYwj

HB-1769

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 8:57:41 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lea Lani Kinikini, PhD	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB 1769 – Relating to Correctional Facilities

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee on Public Safety,

My name is Lea Lani Kinikini I live in Hau‘ula Ahupua‘a in Ko‘olauloa, and am faculty at University of Hawai‘i West Oahu. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of HB 1769, which requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to incrementally reduce the number of Hawai‘i residents incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional facilities.

For decades, Hawai‘i has relied on the transfer of incarcerated individuals to private mainland prisons—most notably the Saguaro Correctional Center—separating people from their families, cultural supports, legal counsel, and rehabilitative resources. This practice has been widely documented as harmful to rehabilitation and reentry because distance weakens the very social connections that reduce recidivism and support accountability.

I'm also a family member of persons impacted by interstate compacts in custody. Many testimonies submitted on this measure recognize that out-of-state incarceration undermines transparency, continuity of care, and community reintegration, particularly for Native Hawaiian and Pacific islander men who are disproportionately represented in the correctional system and whose connection to ‘āina, language, and family is central to healing and successful return.

While reducing reliance on private prisons is an essential structural reform, it must also be paired with meaningful due process protections inside Hawai‘i’s own correctional system. One critical and largely unaddressed issue is the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s current handling of Security Threat Group (STG) identification.

At present, DCR lacks a clear, transparent debriefing process, step-down program, or structured pathway for individuals who have been labeled as affiliated with a Security Threat Group to challenge that designation or safely transition out of it. When a classification decision carries significant consequences—such as housing restrictions, program exclusion, or prolonged isolation—basic constitutional due process requires notice, meaningful review, and an opportunity to contest or remediate the designation. Without such procedural safeguards, STG identification risks functioning as an indefinite administrative punishment rather than a legitimate safety tool. This unconstitutional policy gap has combined with the practice of

compacts to Arizona to build up custodial violence as prison security threat groups are formed from continental prison gang touchpoints, importing these back in the islands.

The absence of a defined debriefing or step-down pathway creates a system where individuals may remain classified indefinitely without a clear standard for release from that status. This raises serious concerns under fundamental due process principles because liberty interests—such as access to programming, classification level, and safe housing—are being affected without a consistent, reviewable process.

If Hawai‘i is serious about improving public safety, rehabilitation, and institutional stability, then reducing out-of-state incarceration must be accompanied by modern, evidence-based classification systems that include:

- Clear criteria for STG designation
- Periodic, meaningful review
- Access to a safe and voluntary debriefing process
- Step-down pathways that incentivize disengagement from gang activity

Systems that lack these elements do not reduce violence—they often entrench it.

HB 1769 represents an important first step toward restoring accountability by bringing responsibility for incarcerated Hawai‘i residents back within the State’s direct oversight. Returning individuals closer to home allows for consistent legal access, family contact, culturally grounded programming, and transparency—conditions repeatedly shown to improve outcomes and reduce recidivism.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB 1769 and to consider complementary reforms that ensure classification practices within DCR meet constitutional due process standards and support genuine rehabilitation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Lea Lani Kinikini, PhD

Director of Research & Engaged Scholarship

University of Hawai‘i West Oahu



Carrie Ann Shiota
Attorney at Law

House Committee on Public Safety
Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair
Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair
Wednesday, February 11, 2026
8:30 A.M.
Conference Room 411

Support for HB1769 Relating to Correctional Facilities

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and Committee Members:

My name is Carrie Ann Shiota. I am an attorney and justice advocate submitting testimony in strong support of **H.B. 1769 Relating to Correctional Facilities**. This vital measure mandates the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to systematically reduce the number of individuals incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions and requires regular reporting to the Legislature.

Historical Context to Out-of-State Transfers to Private-For-Profit Prisons

Hawai'i has earned the dubious distinction of exporting the largest percentage of its prison population to out-of-state private prisons. What began as a "temporary" transfer of 300 prisoners to private prisons in Texas, has evolved into 30 years of a harmful policy with no end in sight.¹ As coined by the late Justice Thurgood Marshall of the U.S. Supreme Court, Hawai'i has "banished" our people to private prisons in Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Mexico, Tennessee and Oklahoma.

Today, the State of Hawai'i contracts with CoreCivic (formerly known as Corrections Corporation of America) to incarcerate nearly 800 people at Saguaro prison in Arizona, documented in the [January 26, 2026, DCR's Weekly Population Report](#). This practice separates families and communities, and for Native Hawaiians, separates them from ancestral lands, which is inextricably tied to cultural identity, health and healing.

This tragic reliance on the exportation of our people to for-profit prisons has become DCR's default status quo, undermining data-driven reforms to safely decarcerate our

¹[Testimony of Carrie Ann Shiota](#) relating to a Public Hearing on Prison Privatization in Arizona, dated October 27, 2020 (outlining the problems associated with prison privatization and interstate prisoner transfers based on Hawai'i's experience with banishment).

incarcerated population and return our people home. The continuation of this policy is actively supported by CoreCivic's lobbyists in Hawai'i who work to ensure the Hawai'i renews these lucrative contracts, and to position this corporation for proposed public-private partnerships to expand jails and prisons.

Upholding Hawaii's Legal Duty: The Dangers and Risks Associated with Out-of State Private Prison Transfers

Hawai'i has a legal responsibility to ensure the safe and humane treatment of people incarcerated within their own jails and prisons, and out-of-state private prisons.

Hawaii's track record of violent assaults, gang activity and deaths that has accumulated at Saguaro prisons aligns with compelling evidence that private prisons are far more dangerous to incarcerated individuals than government-run facilities.

Prison privatization advocates argue that bad things happen in public and private prisons. Indeed, that is true. However, as outlined in ACLU of Hawaii's prior testimony in support of [HRC 153](#) that passed in 2025, prior studies confirm the following:

- In 2016, the DOJ found private prisons more dangerous than public prisons, noting that private prisons have higher assault rates and 50% more incidents of illicit weapons.
- Private prisons have higher levels of escapes, disturbances, and drug use. These elevated risks impact both incarcerated people and staff.
- Private prisons also have higher levels of operational problems and a comparative lack of inmate programs, such as educational, vocational, and counseling programs, which lead to inmate idleness and a lack of preparation for reentry.
- Private prisons have long-term hidden costs estimated to be 20- 30% above per diem costs (increased liability, increased worker compensation costs, increased law enforcement costs that are due to escapes).

Reducing the number of people at Saguaro is an important step to ending Hawaii's contracts with private for profit corporations. This will enable Hawai'i to invest in systemic reforms within Hawaii's criminal legal system relating to diversion, pretrial fairness, ending cash bail, sentencing, and probation and parole supervision, instead of spending public dollars to enrich the CoreCivic corporation in Tennessee and its shareholders.

Hawai'i Underutilizes Strategies to Reduce Incarceration and Out of State Transfers to Private For Profit Prisons

Hawai'i has failed to fully embrace and implement data-drive strategies to reduce the incarcerated population at different entry points into the criminal legal system, and return people home from private-for-profit prisons.

Below, is a sampling of Task Force Reports containing numerous, yet largely unimplemented recommendations to improve the criminal legal system and ultimately reduce the number of people in our carceral system, including those transferred to out-of-state private prisons.

- Hawai'i has failed to implement the majority of recommendations in the [Pretrial Task Force Report \(2018\)](#).
- Hawai'i has failed to implement the majority of recommendations in the [H.C.R. 85 Task Force Report On Prison Reform \(2018\)](#).
- Hawai'i has failed to implement the recommendations in [The Native Hawaiian Justice Task Force Report \(2012\)](#).
- The Hawai'i Judiciary opposed bills to reform the probation system that would have reduced the average length of time under probation supervision and the number of probation revocations. [SB2514/ HB2344 Relating to Probation \(2022\)](#).
- The Hawai'i Paroling Authority opposed bills to reform the parole system that would have reduced the number of parole violations. See [SB2512/ HB2342 Relating to Parole \(2022\)](#).

DCR Erroneously Asserts They Would Have Returned People in Out-of-State Prisons Long Ago "But for the Lack of Space in Hawaii's Correctional Facilities."

The Department of Corrections has repeatedly asserted in past written and oral testimony that the use of private, out-of-state prisons is unavoidable due to "the lack of space in its correctional facilities in which to house them, including the lack of appropriate rehabilitation programs for these inmates."²

²https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/Session2025/Testimony/HCR153_TESTIMONY_PSM_04-11-25_.PDF (page 1).

However, DCR’s own population reports directly contradict this assertion, confirming underutilization or “empty beds” at Kūlani prison on Hawai’i island, Waiawa prison on O’ahu, and the Maui and Kaua’i jails.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION WEEKLY POPULATION
REPORT Date: January 26, 2026

Correctional Facility	Design Capacity	Operational Capacity	Current Total
Kūlani Prison	200	200	82 (118 empty beds)
Waiawa Prison	294	334	169 (165 empty beds)
MCCC Jail (MCCC)	209	301	209 (92 empty beds)
Kauai Jail (KCCC)	110	128	76 (52 empty beds)
Saguaro Prison Arizona	1,896 to 2,000 beds	?	799 (24 Parole Violations)

Total Number of People at Saguaro Prison in Arizona: 799

Total Number of Empty Prison/Jail Beds in Hawai’i: 427

Difference Total Number of People at Saguaro vs. Empty Beds in Hawai’i: 372

The Oversight Commission consistently reports DCR’s work furlough programs are systemically underutilized. Compounding this issue, DCR has failed to expand contracts with community-based work furlough programs operated by non-profit organizations despite research demonstrating more successful reintegration outcomes and lower recidivism rates from these programs.

Core Civic is Profiting from Mass Incarceration and ICE Detention

For decades, private prison corporations have been cashing in on human misery by becoming a lucrative partner for ICE’s immigration agenda. These for-profit corporations are showered with government funds to build and run detention facilities, allowing them amass grotesque wealth from the confinement, transportation and dehumanization of vulnerable people. This unconscionable practice underscores the urgent need to sever all ties with companies that prioritize shareholder profit over human dignity and life.

The two largest private prison profiteers in the United States, CoreCivic and GEO Group, are shamelessly reveling in the expansion of new detention camps, fueled by an influx of federal funding. Their shareholders are celebrating these profits stained by human rights abuses, racism and the deliberate destruction of families.

The State of Hawaii's continued partnership with Corecivic is a moral disgrace and an inexcusable act of collusion with this predatory industry. We demand that Hawaii's leadership systemically reduce out-of-state transfers with the goal of permanently severing all ties with Core Civic, ending the shameful, decades-long policy of banishing our people to private-for profit, out of state prisons.

Proposed Amendments

For these reasons, I respectfully urge this Committee to pass this vital measure, inclusive of the proposed amendments detailed below.

1. Set targeted benchmarks for reductions in out-of-state transfers for incarcerated persons for each year for the next five years to evaluate compliance with this proposed statute.
 - **Recommendation:** Reduce transfers by 80-100 per year and ensuring that people are transitioning directly to facilities other than to Halawa Prison to the greatest extent possible.
2. Remove the word "inmate" from this bill and eventually replace all state laws with the term "incarcerated individual" or "incarcerated person."
 - **Purpose:** To reduce the stigma associated with the criminal justice system, promote rehabilitation, and emphasize the humanity of people in jails and prisons.
 - **Precedence:** A few States have enacted legislation to remove the term "inmate" from state laws and regulations, replacing it with person-first language such as "incarcerated individual" or "incarcerated person."
 - **New York** passed legislation (S. 3332/A. 3295 and A. 9273/S. 8216) in 2021 and 2022 that removed the word "inmate" from state laws, replacing it with "incarcerated individual" or "incarcerated person".
 - **Maryland** passed Senate Bill 0293 in 2023, which officially changed the term "inmate" to "incarcerated individual" in state regulations, defining it as an individual who is actually or constructively detained or confined in a correctional facility.

- As of April 2023, **Governor Gavin Newsom of California's** administration began replacing terms like "inmate" with "incarcerated person" and "parolee" with "supervised person."

In closing, the passage of **H.B. 1769** is a necessary and decisive action to reduce and eventually end Hawaii's detrimental 30-year reliance on out-of-state private prison corporations. By mandating a reduction in transfers, we invest in systemic reform, uphold our legal duties and ensure that accountability and rehabilitation - not corporate profit - are the guiding principles of our justice system. Returning incarcerated individuals closer to home is essential for strengthening relationships with family, service providers, community, *āina*, and culture, which are crucial for successful reintegration, reduced recidivism, and healing.

Mahalo for your consideration and for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of **H.B. 1769 Relating to Correctional Facilities**.

Sincerely,

Carrie Ann Shirota

Carrie Ann Shirota, Esq.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

HB-1769

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 4:43:16 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:30:00 AM

**RECEIVED
Date & Time**

Feb 11, 2026, 7:20 am

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Eaton	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carolyn Eaton and I am a resident of Honolulu. I strongly support this bill, and urge your support.

For years now, it has been an experience of failure and disregard by Core Civic, at the Saguaro facility, for the well-being of our incarcerated citizens. Please bring Hawai'i's practice of out-of-state incarceration to an end as quickly as possible.

Mahalo for the opportunity to express my support for expeditious "draw-down" of this practice.

RECEIVED
Date & Time
Feb 11, 2026, 7:21 am

LATE

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and members of the Committee:

I strongly support HB1769, which requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to systematically reduce Hawai‘i’s reliance on private, out-of-state prisons and report progress to the Legislature. This bill is a necessary step toward ending a 30-year policy that has separated hundreds of Hawai‘i residents from their families, communities, and cultural foundations.

Hawai‘i’s Overreliance on Out-of-State Private Prisons

What began as a temporary measure decades ago has become standard practice. Today, nearly 800 Hawai‘i residents are incarcerated at Saguaro Correctional Center in Arizona under a contract with CoreCivic. Hawai‘i continues to export one of the largest percentages of its prison population in the country.

This practice:

- Separates families and weakens community ties
- Disproportionately impacts Native Hawaiians by removing them from ancestral lands central to identity and healing
- Sends millions of public dollars to mainland corporate shareholders rather than reinvesting locally

Safety and Accountability Concerns

Research and prior federal findings have documented that private prisons:

- Experience higher rates of assault and illicit weapons
- Report more disturbances and drug incidents
- Offer fewer educational and rehabilitative programs
- Carry hidden long-term costs beyond per diem rates

Hawai‘i retains legal and moral responsibility for the people it incarcerates — regardless of where they are housed. Contracting out incarceration does not eliminate that duty.

The “Lack of Space” Argument Is Not Supported by Data

DCR has argued that out-of-state transfers are necessary due to overcrowding. However, recent population reports show hundreds of empty beds across Hawai‘i facilities, including Kūlanī, Waiawa, Maui, and Kaua‘i. The number of available beds significantly narrows the gap between those held in Arizona and those who could be housed in-state.

Additionally, work furlough programs and community-based alternatives remain underutilized, despite strong evidence that they improve reentry outcomes and reduce recidivism.

Unimplemented Reform Recommendations

Over the past decade, multiple task forces have produced recommendations to reduce incarceration through: Pretrial reform, Sentencing reform, probation and parole reform, and culturally responsive approaches

Many of these recommendations remain largely unimplemented. Meaningful decarceration strategies have not been fully pursued.

Public Dollars Should Support Reform — Not Corporate Profit

CoreCivic and similar corporations generate significant revenue from incarceration and immigration detention contracts nationwide. Hawai'i's continued partnership with private prison companies ties state policy to a profit-driven incarceration model rather than a public-safety-driven one.

HB 1769 establishes a framework to:

- Gradually reduce out-of-state prison transfers
- Increase transparency through required reporting
- Move Hawai'i toward ending reliance on private, mainland incarceration contracts

Recommended amendments include setting measurable annual reduction benchmarks and modernizing statutory language to use person-first terminology.

HB1769 is about accountability, fiscal responsibility, public safety, and dignity. Returning incarcerated individuals closer to home strengthens families, improves reintegration outcomes, and aligns state policy with long-term reform goals.

Reducing out-of-state transfers is not only achievable — it is overdue.

Mahalo,

Liam Chinn

Public Safety Consultant

Honolulu



February 2, 2026

Hawaii State Legislature
Committee on Public Safety
Rep. Della Au Bellatti, Chair
Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Support for HB1769 – Relating to Correctional Facilities

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jamee Mahealani Miller, Co-Executive Director of ‘Ekolu Mea Nui, and I strongly support **HB1769**, which requires the Department of Corrections to incrementally reduce the number of people held in private, out-of-state prisons.

Returning our people home matters. Hawai‘i has unused capacity at Kūlani Correctional Facility on Hawai‘i Island and Waiawa Correctional Facility on O‘ahu. Yet instead of using these facilities to expand access to programs, treatment, education, increased time outdoors, and meaningful rehabilitation, the State continues to incarcerate people at Saguaro Correctional Center in Arizona—thousands of miles away from their ‘ohana and support systems.

This practice deepens harm, particularly for Native Hawaiians, by severing relationships to family, culture, and ‘āina—connections that are essential to accountability, healing, and successful reentry.

HB1769 is an important step toward ending this harmful practice and investing instead in data-driven reforms, pu‘uhonua, and culturally grounded approaches that center health, wellness, healing, and community safety.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB1769. I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Jamee Mahealani Miller

Dr. Jamee Mahealani Miller
Co-Executive Director
‘Ekolu Mea Nui
jamee@ekolumeanui.org
(808)430-3380



Committee: House Committee on Public Safety
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 8:30 am
Place: Conference Room 411 & Via Videoconference
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of HB1769: Relating to Correctional Facilities**

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice-Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members:

The ACLU of Hawai'i (ACLU-HI) **supports HB1769: Relating to Correctional Facilities**. This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of individuals incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions and requires reports be made to the Legislature.

It is time to end Hawai'i's relationship with private prison operators like CoreCivic, which profit from the suffering of incarcerated individuals and have proven to repeatedly violate their legal rights. Currently, nearly 800 individuals in the custody of the Hawai'i Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation ("DCR") are incarcerated at Saguaro Correctional Center ("Saguaro"), operated by CoreCivic (formerly CCA).¹

Although CoreCivic owns and operates Saguaro, Hawai'i remains responsible for the health and safety of the people incarcerated there. The systemic harms that have occurred at Saguaro since its opening include incidents of violence, murders and deaths, allegations of unsafe drinking water, and lack of meaningful oversight and staffing that has led to issues with gang-related violence and solitary confinement.

CoreCivic's operation of Saguaro prison has created new problems for Hawai'i. Out-of-state transfers have directly resulted in the formation of bona fide security threat groups,² gang-related violence,³ and long-term solitary confinement⁴ through its SHIP

¹ Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Weekly Population Report. January 26, 2026.

<https://dcr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2026-01-26.pdf>

² Kaneya, R. (2017). *Nevada's 'Most Dangerous' Intimates Move In Hawaii Prisoners*. Honolulu Civil Beat.

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2017/11/nevadas-most-dangerous-inmates-move-in-with-hawaii-prisoners/>

³ ACLU. (2012). *Family of a Second Hawaii Prisoner Murdered in Mainland Prison Files Suit Against State of Hawaii and Corrections Corporation of America*. ACLU of Hawaii. <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/family-second-hawaii-prisoner-murdered-mainland-prison-files-suit-against-state>

⁴ Terring, Tiana. (2020). *The research is clear: Solitary confinement causes long-lasting harm*. Prison Policy Initiative. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/12/08/solitary_symposium/ Also see: https://assets.aclu.org/live/uploads/publications/stop_solitary_briefing_paper_updated_august_2014.pdf

program. Additionally, issues of poor staffing and operation of the Saguaro prison put Hawai‘i individuals at risk. Hawai‘i remains responsible for its citizens in custody, even if they are held in a private facility away from home. We can no longer contract out core governmental responsibilities over community safety and individual rights.

Allowing for individuals to remain close to home is important to improving rehabilitative outcomes and allowing incarcerated individuals to remain connected to family, community, and ‘āina.⁵ As Native Hawaiians are disproportionately overrepresented in the criminal legal system, it is essential to ensure that more are not further disconnected from their culture and genealogical connections.

In October 2024, ACLU of Hawai‘i sent a letter to DCR and CoreCivic demanding an investigation into allegedly contaminated and unsafe drinking water provided to the Hawai‘i individuals incarcerated at Saguaro prison.⁶ We received reports from multiple individuals incarcerated at Saguaro that the facility’s drinking water has a foul taste and smell and is causing serious health problems, particularly for elderly individuals and those with preexisting medical conditions. Hawai‘i has a legal responsibility to ensure the safe and humane treatment of people incarcerated within their own jails and prisons, as well as out-of-state private prisons.

The track record of violent assaults and deaths that has accumulated at Saguaro aligns with compelling evidence that private prisons are far more dangerous to incarcerated individuals than government-run facilities. In 2016, the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found “serious or systemic safety and security deficiencies at contract prisons,” including inmates being improperly housed in segregated units and a lack of strong oversight.⁷ Ending private prison contracts will enable Hawai‘i to better protect its incarcerated individuals from the harms that have arisen at the Saguaro facility.

By passing HB1769, we will also ensure that responsibility and accountability for incarceration will lie with DCR, and that profit is not a motive driving the criminal legal system.

⁵ The Native Hawaiian Justice Task Force Report. (2012). https://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/2012NHITF_REPORT_FINAL_0.pdf

⁶ <https://www.acluhi.org/en/press-releases/SaguaroDemandLetter>

⁷ U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General. (2016). *DOJ OIG Releases Report on the Federal Bureau of Prisons’ Monitoring of Contract Prisons*. <https://oig.justice.gov/news/doj-oig-releases-report-federal-bureau-prisons-monitoring-contract-prisons>

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Donavan Kamakani Albano

Donavan Kamakani Albano

Policy Fellow

ACLU of Hawai'i

dalbano@acluhawaii.org

With more than 4,000 Hawaii-based members, the mission of the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the United States and Hawai'i State Constitutions through legislative, litigation, and public education work. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving our communities in Hawai'i for over 60 years.

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i
P.O. Box 3410
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96801
T: 808.522.5900
F: 808.522.5909
E: office@acluhawaii.org
www.acluhawaii.org



COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair

Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2025 at 8:30 AM
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 1769 Relating to Correctional Facilities

Dear Chair Au Belatti, Vice-Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

[Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice](#) (HFRJ) strongly supports HB 1769 that addresses long-standing harms caused by Hawai'i's reliance on incarceration and the continued use of private, for-profit correctional facilities located on the continent. These practices have separated people from their 'ohana, culture, and communities, undermined rehabilitation, and weakened public safety outcomes.

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (DCR) opposition frames this issue as a simple lack of physical capacity within Hawai'i. That framing ignores decades of community-based evidence showing that incarceration levels are not fixed or inevitable: *they are the product of policy choices*. Continued dependence on private, continental prisons delays reform and perpetuates the overcrowding DCR claims it cannot resolve.

HB 1769 does not mandate an immediate return of all people incarcerated on the continent. It establishes a reasonable, phased reduction: 25% by 2029 and 50% by 2031—precisely to allow time for population reduction strategies, reentry planning, and investment in effective alternatives. Without enforceable timelines, the promise that people would be returned *if space allowed* has proven meaningless.

The Legislature's own [House Concurrent Resolution No. 85 Task Force](#) found that mass incarceration and reliance on out-of-state prisons do not improve public safety and fail to address the underlying causes of criminal behavior. HFRJ's community-based reentry research and pilot projects reinforce these conclusions. HFRJ has implemented and studied [restorative reentry planning circles](#) and [education programs](#), inside Hawai'i correctional facilities that strengthen accountability, support successful reentry, and reduce recidivism risk, which [can help reduce mass incarceration](#) with minimal cost. Much of this work has been [ignored or underutilized by the state's current leadership](#).

The Department's claim that compliance with HB 1769 would require construction of a new \$800–\$900 million prison presents a false choice. Hawai'i can reduce its incarcerated population without building new prisons and jails by investing in sentencing reform, probation and parole support, education, treatment, and culturally responsive reentry strategies. These approaches are evidence-based, fiscally responsible, and aligned with the Legislature's own findings.

HB 1769 reflects a needed shift in DCR's approach, moving away from reliance on incarceration as a behavior-change strategy toward evidence-based practices that support desistance and reduce recidivism.

We urge you to pass HB 1769. Mahalo for your public service and the opportunity to testify.

Lorenn Walker, JD, MPH
Director, Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice

HB-1769

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 11:44:56 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victor K. Ramos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OPPOSE. "If you don't want to do the time, don't commit the crime." When a judge sentenced the convicted criminal for his/her related crime, he/she must complete at least 95 percent of their term. This proposal does not support the victims or justice. If you want to keep criminals home, build more prisons.

HB-1769

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 2:01:36 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colleen Rost-Banik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti and Vice Chair Iwamoto and members of the Public Safety Committee,

My name is Colleen Rost-Banik and I urge you to support HB1769, which requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of people incarcerated in out-of-state, for-profit prisons.

Currently the State of Hawai'i has about 800 people incarcerated at Saguaro Prison in Arizona. It is time to bring our neighbors home, closer to family and loved ones. Instead of relying on for-profit prisons, we could house them at other DCR facilities with empty beds or release them into community-based programming. Partnering with out-of-state, for-profit prisons is not the answer.

I understand that DCR is concerned about how to manage an increased population if this bill is to pass, but I encourage us to think about how passage of HB1769 provides the opportunity for ALL OF US to consider better diversion strategies that would significantly decrease the amount of people who are incarcerated in the first place.

I respectfully request that you support HB1769.

Mahalo for your consideration.
Colleen Rost-Banik, PhD
Instructor of Sociology
University of Hawai'i, Mānoa

To: Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair
Committee on Public Safety

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 10, 2026

RE: House Bill 1769
Measure Title: RELATING TO CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.
Report Title: Corrections; Private, Out-of-state Prisons; Reduction; Reports

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 1769. There is a sufficient amount of time to identify all the logistics involved with carrying out this bill (i.e., availability of space at correctional facilities, staff, programming needs, etc.). All that remains is the willingness to implement it. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

HB-1769

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 6:33:46 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Seikai Darcy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB 1769

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice-Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee on Public Safety.

It is with deep appreciation that I share support for HB 1769. My name is Lisa Darcy and as a Maui resident who works directly with incarcerated individuals and those discharged without bridges to successful reintegration, this Bill is quite refreshing. It is reassuring to see the changes that Senator Chun Oakland strived to see move forward over 10 years ago are being realized.

The work we moved forward was evidence based. Core features, which are vastly short-term and long-term financially cost effective AND most importantly, created front-end structures which provided the tool needed to initiate healthy processes for rehabilitation.

It is commonly known that family and ohana supports for those incarcerated are valuable for all aspects of incarceration. Shipping incarcerated away from these supports hinders rehabilitation, it is costly and it has no proof that it fosters or expedites successful reintegration.

I do not think this Bill goes nearly far enough though I do acknowledge it is one that is providing a pathway towards reconciling the complex features of the disproportionate number of Native Hawaiians who are represented in these circumstances.

There are numerous reasons to factually and ethically support this Bill and above all, this committee is charged with the honor to turn the canoe into a direction which can provide the shift in the winds of recovery and rehabilitation.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Lisa Darcy, Kula, Maui, HI

HB-1769

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 1:40:35 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:30:00 AM

**RECEIVED
Date & Time**

Feb 11, 2026, 7:21 am

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a person of faith who believes that individuals thrive most with community and connection, and that people should not profit off of human suffering, I strongly support HB1769. This bill would require the Director to incrementally reduce the number of people held in private out-of-state prisons, like Saguaro in Arizona which houses many Hawai'i inmates.

Sending inmates away is a harmful and expensive practice that disconnects families and breaks support systems while prison shareholders, like Core Civic, make money. The State of Hawai'i has other options besides locking people up out of state. We could transfer people to Kūlani on Hawai'i Island and at Waiawa on O'ahu, and increase access to programs, treatment and educational opportunities, and time outdoors.

There are data-driven reforms, pu'uhonua and culturally grounded programs that focus on health, wellness, healing, and accountability that the State of Hawai'i could invest in instead of being complicit in trafficking our people, disproportionately Native Hawaiians, away from 'ohana and 'āina.

Please consider what's best for Hawai'i's people, not what will generate the most profit.

Mahalo,

Kristen Young
Honolulu, HI 96813