



APRIL 8, 2026

HCR 185/HR 175

CURRENT REFERRAL: ECD

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Kris Coffield,
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Director

Beatrice DeRego,
Director

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*Policy and Partnerships
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POSITION: SUPPORT

Imua Alliance supports HCR 185/HR 175, urging all county planning and permitting agencies to deny all permit applications related to the construction, expansion, or use of warehouses by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement for the purpose of detaining individuals facing deportation.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending sexual exploitation and gender violence, and combating all forms of systemic exploitation in our society. We have encountered numerous migrant survivors of sexual exploitation in our work, which is why we strongly support measures that advance community safety and survivor protections by reducing the harmful spillover of immigration enforcement into local institutions people rely on for protection, care, and due process.

Trafficking survivors are particularly vulnerable to heightened immigration enforcement practices. Survivors often face language barriers, trauma, threats from traffickers, and fear of retaliation. When immigration enforcement expands into community spaces or becomes more aggressive, survivors are less likely to report trafficking, seek protective orders, access emergency shelter, or obtain medical care because they fear detention or deportation. This reduces reporting, weakens prosecutions of traffickers, and ultimately makes communities less safe.

Recent national data underscore why these concerns matter. Immigration detention data analyzed by Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) found that **a large share of individuals held in immigration detention have no criminal convictions**, and recent reporting has shown that a growing number of immigration arrests involve individuals without criminal charges. When enforcement expands beyond serious public safety threats, the predictable result is broader community fear and increased vulnerability for victims of crime and exploitation.

Hawai'i would not be alone in taking steps to limit immigration detention infrastructure. Several states and local governments across the country have already adopted policies to restrict or prohibit immigration detention facilities, contracts, or land use for detention purposes. For example, New Jersey enacted a law prohibiting both private and public facilities from entering contracts with ICE to detain immigrants, effectively preventing new immigration detention facilities from operating in the state.

Similarly, Illinois enacted a statewide ban preventing local governments from entering into detention agreements with ICE, and courts upheld the law, allowing the state to limit local participation in immigration detention. More recently, New Mexico passed legislation banning local governments from contracting with ICE for immigration detention, continuing a national trend of states limiting detention infrastructure within their borders.

At the local level, cities and counties have also used zoning laws, moratoriums, land-use restrictions, and permit requirements to prevent the construction or expansion of immigration detention centers. For instance, Seattle and several surrounding jurisdictions enacted moratoriums on new detention facilities, and other cities have changed zoning codes to prevent detention centers from being built.

These policies reflect a growing recognition that while immigration enforcement is federal policy, the land, facilities, and local infrastructure used for detention often fall under state and local control, giving states and local governments an important role in determining whether detention facilities operate within their communities.

Limiting the purchase, development, or use of facilities for immigration detention is not simply an immigration policy issue; it is a public safety, community stability, and land use issue. Detention facilities are large-scale institutional operations that affect local infrastructure, housing markets, public services, and community trust. Communities across the country have raised concerns about detention facilities due to reports of poor conditions, lack of oversight, medical neglect, and prolonged detention in facilities not designed for long-term confinement.

This resolution sends an important message that Hawai'i's resources shall be reserved for the public trust, not the propagation of fear.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance



Committee: Economic Development & Technology
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 9:30am
Place: Conference Room 423 & Via Videoconference
Re: *Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of HCR185 / HR175*

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Committee Members:

The ACLU of Hawai'i **supports HCR185 / HR175** urging all county planning and permitting agencies to deny all permit applications related to the construction, expansion, or use of warehouses by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement for the purpose of detaining individuals facing deportation.

President Trump and his allies in Congress have conspired to supercharge ICE's budget to fuel the most extreme expansion of immigration detention in our nation's history, with a record-shattering 60,000 people detained right now and far more underway. From erecting tent camps on military bases to big private prisons, the Trump administration is on a spending spree and the number of people detained will skyrocket over the next two and a half years.

For a year, the ACLU has been raising alarms about the terrible conditions and deplorable treatment of individuals held in ICE detention facilities across the country. Late last year, ACLU National, along with the New Mexico and Texas affiliates sent a letter to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) regarding "Coercive Third Country Deportations and Abusive Conditions of Confinement in Immigration Detention at Fort Bliss, TX (Camp East Montana)".¹

Perhaps ironically, the facility referenced in the letter was used during World War II as a Japanese internment camp. Another dark time in our country's history in which we scapegoated and demonized immigrants. And Hawai'i served as another state in which immigrants were corralled.

Today, Hawai'i is home to approximately 258,000 immigrants, a little more than 10% of whom are likely undocumented. These are our friends and neighbors, coworkers and colleagues. We must not allow our island chain home to become another site of brutal and inhumane detention centers.

¹ Certified Letter Dated December 8, 2025. <https://www.aclu.org/documents/ice-letter-re-fort-bliss>

This resolution is another opportunity to stand up to rising fascism in our country and to stand in solidarity with and in defense of our immigrant community. The Aloha Spirit demands it.²

Please support HCR185/HR175 and pass these resolutions today.

Mahalo,

Josh Frost

Josh Frost

Policy Advocate

ACLU of Hawai'i

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With more than 4,000 Hawai'i-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.

² § 5-7.5 "Aloha Spirit". <https://www.hawaii.edu/uho/clear/home/lawaloha.html>