

Honolulu, Hawaii
, 2026

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RE: H.B. No. 1628
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Public Safety, to which was referred H.B. No. 1628 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO COMPASSIONATE RELEASE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish a protocol for compassionate release for certain ill or seriously debilitated incarcerated persons.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission; Office of the Public Defender; Office of the Prosecuting Attorney of the County of Kaua'i; American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i; Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation; FAMM; Community Alliance on Prisons; Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center; Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice; First Unitarian Church of Honolulu; Ho'omana Pono, LLC; Hawaii Disability Rights Center; 'Ekolu Mea Nui; Ohana Ho'opakele; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Hawaii Paroling Authority; Crime Victim Compensation Commission; Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu; Sex Abuse Treatment Center; and three individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from Neighborhood Security Watch Kapalama.



Your Committee finds that from an operational and fiscal perspective, Hawaii spends significant public resources incarcerating elderly and medically frail individuals, often incurring extraordinarily high medical expenses without a corresponding public benefit. Your Committee also finds that compassionate release is regarded as a best practice and exists in the other forty-nine states, the District of Columbia, and the federal system. Hawaii remains the only state without a compassionate release protocol. Your Committee further finds that this measure reflects a shared commitment to public safety, human dignity, and fiscal responsibility.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the term "debilitating, chronic, or irreversible condition" to "debilitating or irreversible condition";
- (2) Clarifying the definition of "incarcerated person";
- (3) Further clarifying that an incarcerated person may be considered for compassionate release if the incarcerated person has medical needs that require a complexity of treatment or level of care that the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is unable to provide on a long-term basis or the incarcerated person would otherwise be more appropriately able to manage in a community setting;
- (4) Requiring that at least forty-eight hours before an incarcerated person's administrative hearing for compassionate release, the Hawaii Paroling Authority must provide notice of the hearing to the prosecuting attorney of the applicable county;
- (5) Amending the preamble to highlight that compassionate release of elderly or seriously ill incarcerated persons is fiscally sound and prudent;
- (6) Changing its effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and



- (7) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1628, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1628, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Public Safety,



DELLA AU BELATTI, Chair



