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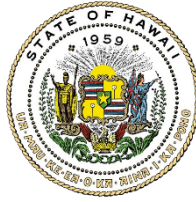
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**March 30, 2026**

**HB 1769, HD2, SD1: RELATING TO CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES**

**Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means:**

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD) **supports** HB 1769 HD2 SD1, which requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to incrementally return individuals incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions to in-state facilities and establishes a structured, phased reduction with reporting to the Legislature.

The OPD represents the vast majority of individuals incarcerated in Hawai'i, and our attorneys routinely witness the profound and lasting harm caused by out-of-state incarceration. As the Legislature has recognized, the practice of transferring Hawai'i residents to private prisons on the continental United States separates individuals from their families, culture, legal counsel, and support systems which undermines rehabilitation and creates significant barriers to successful reentry.

The DCR contracts with and houses incarcerated individuals at the Saguaro Correctional Center in Arizona, a for-profit private prison. The physical distance alone makes in-person visitation, attorney communication, and family engagement exceptionally difficult and cost-prohibitive. These disruptions weaken critical social supports that research consistently demonstrates are essential to rehabilitation and reduced recidivism.

From the defense perspective, out-of-state incarceration also complicates post-conviction representation, parole preparation, and coordination with Hawai'i-based treatment providers, housing resources, and reentry programs. Attorney-client communication is more difficult across state lines, and meaningful reintegration planning cannot occur effectively when individuals are geographically and culturally

removed from the community to which they will return. Most individuals incarcerated out-of-state will ultimately come home to Hawai'i. Successful transition planning must begin well before release and is most effective when conducted in-state.

Out-of-state incarceration also erodes accountability and transparency. Contracting with private, for-profit prisons monetizes incarceration and shifts core governmental responsibilities to entities whose financial incentives are misaligned with rehabilitation and public safety. Limited oversight creates risk that cost containment may occur through reduced staffing levels, diminished medical and mental health services, fewer educational and rehabilitative programs, and substandard living conditions. These conditions are directly linked to instability and poorer long-term outcomes.

This measure appropriately acknowledges that Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai'i's criminal legal system and are more likely to experience incarceration and out-of-state exile. The removal of Native Hawaiian individuals from their home, culture, and family compounds historical and intergenerational harm and runs counter to Hawai'i's constitutional values and commitments

The OPD strongly supports the SD1 amendments, which improve upon prior versions of the bill by requiring the return of incarcerated individuals to begin earlier—on July 1, 2027, rather than delaying implementation until 2029. Beginning this process sooner is critical. Every year that individuals remain housed out-of-state represents continued separation from family, diminished access to counsel, and missed opportunities for meaningful reentry planning.

By initiating returns in 2027 and continuing with incremental increases in subsequent years, the bill strikes an appropriate balance between urgency and practicality. It allows DCR to responsibly expand in-state capacity while ensuring that the State begins to address the harms of out-of-state incarceration without unnecessary delay.

This incremental framework reflects the recommendations of the House Concurrent Resolution No. 85 task force and reinforces the growing consensus that mass incarceration has not improved public safety and imposes immense fiscal and social costs without addressing the root causes of justice system involvement.

For these reasons, the Office of the Public Defender **supports** HB 1769 HD2 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1769 HD2 SD1**

RELATING TO CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ke Ki‘ina Hana a me nā Kumuwaiwai

(Senate Committee on Ways and Means)

Ke Kapitala ‘o Hawai‘i

(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

‘Apelila 1, 2026

10:03 AM

Lumi 211

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Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB1769 HD2 SD1** which requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of individuals incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional facilities and report regularly to the Legislature on progress toward bringing them home.

OHA supports this measure because out-of-state incarceration has caused lasting harm to pa‘ahao, their ‘ohana, and the lāhui. Incarcerating people thousands of miles from Hawai‘i separates them from ‘ohana, culture, legal access, community support, and reentry planning. For many, it operates as double punishment: incarceration and exile from their homeland. These harms undermine rehabilitation and make successful reintegration more difficult.

This issue is especially impactful for Native Hawaiians, who comprise the highest percentage of people incarcerated in out-of-state facilities at 41%.<sup>1</sup> OHA has long raised concerns about the disparate treatment of Native Hawaiians throughout the criminal legal system,<sup>2</sup> and out-of-state incarceration compounds those inequities by deepening cultural disconnection and family separation. For Native Hawaiian pa‘ahao, distance from ‘āina, ‘ohana, and ‘ike kūpuna can weaken the very foundations most important to healing and restoration.

This measure reflects an important historical reality. When Hawai‘i first began sending prisoners out of state in 1995, the practice was described as temporary. Thirty years later, many pa‘ahao and their families are still waiting. OHA would prefer to bring

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Hawaiian Affairs, *The Disparate Treatment of Native Hawaiians in the Criminal Justice System* (2010), [https://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/factsheets\\_final\\_web\\_0.pdf](https://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/factsheets_final_web_0.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Office of Hawaiian Affairs, *Criminal Justice*, <https://www.oha.org/governance/criminal-justice/>

everyone home now. But repeated efforts to require this have failed, and continued delay is not acceptable. This bill remains a meaningful step forward because it now begins the return process earlier, requiring returns beginning in 2027, followed by additional reductions in 2028 and 2029, and continued annual reductions thereafter. That phased structure allows time for planning and implementation while still creating a clear statutory path away from long-term reliance on private, out-of-state incarceration.

OHA also supports the bill's reporting requirements. Regular reports to the Legislature promote transparency, accountability, and oversight as the State works toward a complete return of affected individuals. Reducing reliance on private, out-of-state facilities, including facilities operated for profit or through public-private partnerships, will help restore public responsibility for the care, custody, rehabilitation, and reintegration of Hawai'i's pa'ahao.

For these reasons, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs respectfully urges this Committee to PASS **HB1769 HD2 SD1**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



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.)

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**  
**E HUIKALA A MA'EMA'E NO**  
235 S. Beretania Street, 16th Floor  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
(808) 587-4160

TO: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

SUBJECT: House Bill 1769, House Draft 2, Senate Draft 1, Relating to Correctional Facilities  
Hearing: Wednesday, April 1, 2026; 10:03a.m.  
State Capitol, Room 211

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) submits testimony in **support** of House Bill 1769, House Draft 2, Senate Draft 1, 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.

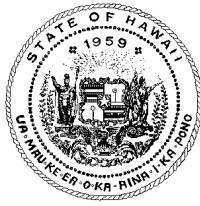
Second, out-of-state facilities often operate under different regulatory and oversight standards, reducing transparency and accountability. This can lead to inconsistent care, inadequate medical and mental health services, and higher vulnerability to abuse or neglect. Out of state private institutions 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](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**  
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**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, HOUSE DRAFT 2, SENATE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.

by  
Tommy Johnson, Director  
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 1, 2026; 10:03 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & via Videoconference

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) **opposes** House Bill (HB) 1769, House Draft (HD) 2, Senate Draft (SD) 1, which seeks to require DCR to reduce the number of inmates housed at private out-of-state correctional institutions by 5% no later than July 1, 2027, and beginning July 1, 2028, to further reduce the number of inmates housed in private out-of-state correctional institutions by 10%, and beginning July 1, 2029, to further reduce the of inmates housed in private out-of-state correctional institutions by 15%, and to also further reduce the number of inmates housed at private out-of-state correctional institutions by 5% beginning on July 1, 2031, and each year thereafter, with the director returning a number of committed felons equal to 5% of the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions as of July 1 of that year to in-state facilities. **The DCR respectfully requests that the return of 30% of the inmates housed on the mainland within the 3-year period mandated, which equates to approximately 240 inmates coincide with the construction of a new medium-security male prison on Oahu or the expansion of**

**the current Halawa Correctional Facility (HCF) on Oahu to add a new module, which would be two blocks of 124 beds each for a total of 248 beds.**

**As written, this measure seeks to reduce the mainland inmate population 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.**

DCR understands the intent of HB 1769, HD2, SD 1, to return committed felons incarcerated in private mainland facilities to Hawai'i. DCR shares the concerns raised regarding 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 HCF, the only male medium security prison in the State. HCF has a design capacity of 496 offenders. However, at present there are 817 convicted male felons housed at that facility, which is 65% over its designed capacity. Currently, there are 797 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), nor those re-sentenced from probation to prison terms by court orders. Furthermore, DCR is required to accept all parole and probation violators, where the court or the Hawai'i Paroling Authority has issued an executed warrant of arrest. 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 5% of the sentenced felony probationers (approximately 550) were re-sentenced to prison, the State's correctional system, which is already severely strained with insufficient capacity, 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 whom are sentenced felony probationers facing revocation and re-sentencing to prison.

DCR's eight (8) jails and prisons, which are old, manpower-intensive, and constantly in need of major repairs, makes it impossible to house these offenders in Hawai'i. 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 facilities' medium custody level beds are currently filled beyond their designed capacities, to return 30% or approximately 240 of the 797 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 if the goal is to ultimately return all our inmates, 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.

With DCR having direct knowledge and understanding of the space requirements to comply with this measure in bringing back offenders, DCR wants to emphasize the need to consider the incremental return of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions to in-state correctional facilities **must be tied to the construction of a new medium-security male correctional facility on Oahu or the expansion of the current Halawa Correctional Facility on Oahu to add a new module, which would be two blocks of 124 beds each for a total of 248 beds.** Requiring DCR to return out-of-state inmates without a new facility to house them will only exacerbate the already severely overcrowded conditions at HCF. To do so would create inhumane conditions of confinement, which may trigger the Department of Justice's intervention.

**Finally, pursuant to HRS §353L-3(b)(2) the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission is required to establish maximum inmate population limits**

**for each correctional facility and formulate policies and procedures to prevent the inmate population from exceeding the capacity of each correctional facility. Since DCR has little to no control over the inmate population because we are required to accept all offenders sentenced to our custody and care, DCR looks forward to the oversight commission's update in this critically important area.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **opposition** to HB 1769, HD 2, SD 1.

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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*Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor*



## COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

10:03 AM

Room 211 and VIDEOCONFERENCE

## **STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB1769 HD2, SD1 - RETURNING HAWAII'S PEOPLE INCARCERATED IN CORPORATE PRISONS**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki 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 3,626 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars<sup>1</sup> and under the "care and custody" of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on March 23, 2026. We are always mindful that 795 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 HB1769 HD2** that requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally return committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions to in-state correctional facilities and requires reports to the Legislature. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD2)

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<sup>1</sup> DCR Weekly Population Report, March 23, 2026

[Pop-Reports-Weekly-2026-03-23.pdf](#)

Currently there are 771 sentenced felons incarcerated at Saguaro Correctional Center. Why have do we have 24 parole violators sent thousands of miles away from their families and community?

**COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS PREFERS THAT HAWAII CANCEL THE CONTRACT WITH THE SAGUARO CORPORATE PRISON IN ELOY ARIZONA WHERE TOO MANY PEOPLE HAVE DIED DUE TO NEGLIGENCE OR CORPORATE POLICY.** This is because of the way that the contract is written ostensibly by the Office of the Attorney General. We speak with several incarcerated people there who report that our contract is written in favor of CoreCivic - or maybe CoreCivic wrote the contract - which in many ways, allows our people there to be treated differently, and more punitively, than incarcerated people from Idaho and Montana. Why do we permit this?

Almost every incarcerated person will return to the community some day. How they are treated while incarcerated will definitely affect how they return to their families and communities.

Over thirty years, Community Alliance on Prisons has witnessed this indifference to Hawai'i's people. When we have reported abuses to the department, their response is always the same, "We have spoken with the facility and that is not true. Inmates lie."

An example is when Saguaro was built. The drains in the showers were improperly installed and the modules were flooded with dirty water. When we met with the department, we were assured they would look into this public health problem. After a while, they reported back to us that there was no problem with the drains in the showers and "Inmates lie."

Fast forward to 3 or 4 months later, the men reported to us that the showers were under construction because the drains were too high and flooding the modules.

We received numerous calls and letters about Hawai'i's Contract Monitor. It was reported that the Contract Monitor from another state intervened when the Hawai'i Contract Monitor, Jennifer Bechler, was being especially harsh toward our people. Hawai'i has taken a 'hands off' approach to how our people are treated (or mistreated) there and they let Ms. Bechler do whatever she wants, which amounts to retaliating against our people when they assert their

constitutional rights regarding freedom of religion, medical care, interfering with mail and many other violations of her contract. Ms. Bechler is paid with taxpayer money and the community demands that our family and friends be treated with respect, which is how we expect them to return home.

One of our concerns is that it appears that these corporate prisons work 'on the cheap' and their work is shoddy. This gives us pause for the construction of the new O`ahu jail, which is slated as a public-private partnership. Is Hawai`i going to 'partner' with a corporation that has a record of shoddy construction?

Let's return our people to their families and communities and start working in earnest on the complex issues of reentry. There is so much we can do to return people who have not been broken by corporate greed. We want people to be given every opportunity to succeed as pro-social community members. Over the years we have met people who would be tremendous assets to our communities.

Despite the DCR Director's reluctance, there is ample room in two Hawai`i prisons. As of March 23, 2026 the Weekly Population Report clearly states that **Kulani Correctional Facility with an operational capacity of 200, has 77 people, an operational rate of 38.5% and Waiawa Correctional Facility with an operational capacity of 334, has 154 people, an operational capacity of 46.1%.**

What is going on???

Each person there is a human being who has people who love them. Please exercise the care and concern that DCR lacks.

Please pass HB 1769 HD2, SD1 and take control of an out-of-control correctional system that is in serious crisis. Too many deaths are happening at Saguro - both natural and by suicide. HAWAII CAN AND MUST DO BETTER!

Mahalo for this opportunity to share our deep concerns about contracting with profiteers who care little for our people.

Please pass this bill that PSM amended by changing the percentages of returning people at 5% in 2027, 10% in 2028, and 15% in 2029. Mahalo nui!



APRIL 1, 2026

## HOUSE BILL 1769 HD2 SD1

CURRENT REFERRAL: WAM

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*Director*

Beatrice DeRego,  
*Director*

Corey Rosenlee,  
*Director*

Amy Zhao,  
*Policy and Partnerships  
Strategist*

### POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

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Imua Alliance supports and suggests amendments for HB 1769 HD2 SD1, relating to correctional facilities, which requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally return committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions to in-state correctional facilities. Requires reports to the Legislature.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai‘i-based organization dedicated to ending sexual exploitation and gender violence. For decades, Hawai‘i has relied on private prisons on the mainland to house a significant portion of its incarcerated population. At times, Hawai‘i has held one of the highest percentages of incarcerated people in out-of-state facilities in the nation, with thousands of residents sent thousands of miles away from their families and communities.

Today, the state still incarcerates hundreds of people in private facilities such as the Saguaro Correctional Center in Arizona, separating individuals from family, cultural connection, legal support, and reentry services that are critical for successful reintegration into society.

This practice has serious consequences for families, communities, and public safety. Research consistently shows that maintaining family connections during incarceration improves reentry outcomes and reduces recidivism risk. Hawai‘i already struggles with high recidivism rates—more than half of released individuals are rearrested or return to supervision within three years—demonstrating the need for stronger reentry support and community connection, not further isolation.

Out-of-state incarceration also raises serious concerns about oversight and accountability. Private prisons are operated for profit, and federal studies have found that private facilities often experience higher rates of violence, contraband, and safety incidents compared to publicly operated facilities.

Additionally, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are disproportionately represented in Hawai‘i’s correctional system, and sending individuals

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thousands of miles away from their ‘āina, culture, and community further compounds historical and systemic inequities. Returning people to Hawai‘i allows for culturally grounded programming, family visitation, and more effective rehabilitation and reentry planning.

This measure does not require immediate closure of out-of-state facilities, but instead establishes a gradual, responsible plan to bring people home and reduce reliance on private mainland prisons over time. This measured approach allows the state to plan for capacity, programming, and reentry services, while moving toward a more humane and accountable correctional system.

That said, we urge your committee to amend this measure by accelerating the timeline for the return of inmates from five percent per year to fifty percent by July 1, 2029 and fifty percent by July 1, 2031, as the proposal originally called for. At a rate of five percent, as the bill currently calls for, total inmate return would not occur until the year 2045, twenty years in the future and beyond the sentence length of many inmates.

Ultimately, this bill is about public safety, family stability, rehabilitation, and accountability. People who maintain family connections, receive programming, and reenter communities with support are less likely to return to prison and more likely to become productive members of society.

With aloha,

*Kris Coffield*

President, Imua Alliance



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Wednesday April 1, 2026  
TIME: 10:30 a.m.  
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE & Conference Room 211

### **HB 1769, HD2, SB1 Relating to Correctional Facilities Hawai'i**

Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice strongly supports HB 1769 to return people incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions to in-state correctional facilities.

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) claims there is no space to bring people home. That is not accurate. Kulani Correctional Facility on Hawai'i Island and Waiawa Correctional Facility on O'ahu both have capacity that could absorb incarcerated people that would free up room without building a single new cell. New prison construction is not required—political will is.

Hawai'i spends over \$60 million per year for CoreCivic, a private for-profit corporation in Arizona. That is \$60 million annually that could instead pay for diversion programs, reentry services, and community-based alternatives that reduce the number of people needing beds in the first place, here, at home, where it benefits Hawai'i families and communities.

DCR is also opposing HB 1628 HD2, the compassionate release bill. DCR simultaneously argues it has no room while blocking the most logical way to create room. Compassionate release exists precisely to free space by releasing people who are elderly, terminally ill, or incapacitated people who pose no meaningful public safety risk, and who are among the most expensive to house. The Legislature should advance both bills together.

[Research on over 16,000 people](#) released from Minnesota prisons found that those who received visits had felony reconvictions 13% lower and parole revocations 25% lower than those who received no visits. The reasons to bring home our 800 people in Arizona are clear.

Every year these men remain away they are cut off from their families and, for Native Hawaiians, from their language and culture. The harm that this causes is preventable.

DCR has identified obstacles. This bill creates accountability. Please pass HB 1769 HD2, SD1.

Mahalo for your service and the opportunity to testify.

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

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 10:23:56 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shelby Pikachu Billionaire	Testifying for Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands & Ohana Unity Party	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**\*\*In Strong Support of HB1769 HD2 – Relating to Correctional Facilities\*\***

**\*\*Aloha kakou e nā mea Kūpono o ka ‘Aha ‘Ōlelo,\*\***

I submit this testimony in **\*\*strong and unconditional support\*\*** of **\*\*HB1769 HD2\*\***. This bill is not just about corrections policy — it is about **\*\*restoring dignity, family, culture, and healing\*\*** to our lāhui. Hawai‘i has for too long exported our people — especially our Native Hawaiian brothers and sisters — to private, for-profit prisons thousands of miles away on the mainland. These facilities rip fathers from their sons, mothers from their daughters, and entire ‘ohana from the ‘āina that defines who we are. Native Hawaiians remain grossly overrepresented in our criminal legal system.

Sending them out-of-state compounds the intergenerational trauma caused by the loss of land, language, and self-determination. HB1769 HD2 finally says **\*\*enough\*\***. It requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to begin bringing our committed felons home — incrementally, responsibly, and with accountability. Starting with 25% by July 1, 2029 and 5% annually thereafter, plus mandatory annual reports to the Legislature. It ends the practice of new transfers to private, out-of-state for-profit prisons.

This is a clear, actionable step toward rehabilitation, cultural reconnection, and true public safety rooted in Hawaiian values.

**\*\*As a Waianae resident and Native Hawaiian advocate\*\***, I have seen firsthand how distance destroys families and how isolation increases recidivism. Bringing our people back to in-state facilities means they can participate in culturally grounded programs, stay connected to ‘ohana, and begin the real work of healing on their own ‘āina. This is mālama for our beneficiaries. This is pono. OHA has already taken a position in support of this bill because it directly advances our kuleana to advocate for Native Hawaiian well-being. I urge every Trustee, every legislator, and every decision-maker to stand with this measure.

**\*\*My own record shows I fight for results, not rhetoric.\*\*** I

recently helped pass **\*\*SB1249 — Duke Pia’s Law (Act 235, 2025)\*\*** and secured \$800,000 in federal NAHASDA funding for our people. I maintain active relationships with our full Congressional delegation.

Whether serving as your next OHA Trustee At-Large or as OHA’s Washington, D.C. Bureau Chief (to which I applied on the March 31 deadline), I will continue pushing for policies that bring our lāhui home — physically, culturally, and spiritually.

**\*\*The time for half-measures is over.\*\*** **\*\*Support HB1769 HD2.\*\*** Bring our people home. Honor our ‘āina. Heal our families. **\*\*He ali‘i ka ‘āina, he kauwā ke kanaka.\*\*** The land is the chief; we are its servants. **\*\*Imua e nā pōki‘i!\*\*** Forward, my younger siblings — forward with courage and with action. **\*\*Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.\*\*** I am available for any questions and stand ready to support this bill in any way needed.

**\*\*With aloha and determination,\*\*** **\*\*Shelby Billionaire, HRM\*\*** Candidate – OHA Trustee At-Large 2026 Applicant – OHA Washington, D.C. Bureau Chief

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 11:30:12 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kehaulani Lum	Testifying for Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In Strong Support of HB1769, HD2, SD1 Relating to Correctional Facilities

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, My name is Kehaulani Lum, and I serve as the Pelekikena of the Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club (APHCC), a Native Hawaiian organization chartered by the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs in 1973. Our mission is to educate, research, protect and preserve the Hawaiian culture, among other things.

We are headquartered in 'Aiea, near the Hālawā Prison and the State Animal Quarantine Station, which is the State's proposed site for a new OCCC community. With the help of lead cultural practitioners, we participated in several opening ceremonies for the Makahiki Season at Hālawā and Waiau and were honored and inspired to be included.

In partnership with others, we have also successfully supported residential life skills programming for individuals released from prison.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to offer our strong support for HB1769, HD2, SD1, A Bill for an Act Relating to Correctional Facilities.

The purpose of this measure is to require the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally return committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions to in-state correctional facilities.

The Bill finds that "Hawai'i's long-standing reliance on private, out-of-state correctional facilities has separated incarcerated individuals from their families, culture, and support systems, resulting in increased trauma and barriers to rehabilitation." Further, it finds that these transfers reduce transparency and accountability while disproportionately harming Native Hawaiians and other communities already overrepresented in the criminal legal system."

APHCC commends the Committee for considering the gradual ending of the use of out-of-state private prisons, returning individuals to facilities within Hawai'i in order to strengthen rehabilitation, support family connections, and advancing a more just and community-based correctional system.

It is written that in the 1600s, England sent their inmates to America, in order to empty their jails. After their loss of the Colonies in the American Revolution, they sent over 160,000 "convicts" to Australia, to solve its overcrowded prisons. In the 1790s, the British Captain William Brown identified Hawai'i as a potential penal colony for the same reason. 200 years later, Hawai'i is transporting our prisoners to lands far away, in a purely transactional manner, because plans such as those proposed here were not in place when the laws and policies that lead to explosive incarceration increases came about.

Removing individuals from their birthplace, culture, environment, family, traditional foods, community system, and, indeed, the healing breath of life that sustains millions of people in Hawai'i every year appears cruel and unusual.

Moreover, as a Committee whose kuleana concerns fiscal resources, it can not be overstated that sending nearly \$50,000,000 a year in funds to another State, rather than stimulating our economy, here at home, is fiscally imprudent, especially, at a time when we are experiencing a tourism downturn, federal job cuts, and, most recently, a projected \$1 billion-plus in Kona-low storm recover costs.

Let us be visionary, compassionate and purposeful in addressing one of the most challenging problems affecting our people and our State. Let us bring our people home.

We respectfully request your support for HB1769, HD2, SD1

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Kehaulani Lum, Pelekikena

Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club

Committee: Ways and Means  
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 10:03am  
Place: Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference  
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i SUPPORTS HB1769  
HD2 SD1 Relating to Correctional Facilities**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The ACLU of Hawai'i (ACLU-HI) **supports HB1769 HD2 SD1 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.

HB1769 HD2 SD1 outlines a required timeline for the Hawai'i Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to return the number of incarcerated people in private, out-of-state correctional institutions to in-state correctional facilities. We appreciate the increased percentages established in the current draft, this rate of return could nonetheless take nearly a decade, or more, to return all prisoners to Hawai'i.

We believe it is necessary to end now 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 DCR are incarcerated at Saguaro Correctional Center ("Saguaro"), operated by CoreCivic (formerly CCA).<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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>

groups,<sup>2</sup> gang-related violence,<sup>3</sup> and long-term solitary confinement<sup>4</sup> through its SHIP 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> Ending private prison contracts will enable Hawai‘i to

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<sup>2</sup> Kaneya, R. (2017). *Nevada’s ‘Most Dangerous’ Intimates Move In Hawai‘i Prisoners*. Honolulu Civil Beat. <https://www.civilbeat.org/2017/11/nevadas-most-dangerous-inmates-move-in-with-hawaii-prisoners/>

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

<sup>4</sup> 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/](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](https://assets.aclu.org/live/uploads/publications/stop_solitary_briefing_paper_updated_august_2014.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The Native Hawaiian Justice Task Force Report. (2012). [https://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/2012NHJTF\\_REPORT\\_FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/2012NHJTF_REPORT_FINAL_0.pdf)

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

<sup>7</sup> 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>

better protect its incarcerated individuals from the harms that have arisen at the Saguaro facility.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

**Donavan Kamakani Albano**

Donavan Kamakani Albano

Policy Fellow

ACLU of Hawai'i

[dalbano@acluhawaii.org](mailto:dalbano@acluhawaii.org)

*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.*

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**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 1:51:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Debra Koonohiokala Norenberg	Testifying for Kauwamakaainanakahunaalii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill along with an increase in funding to the Correctional Department to address any related issues associated with the change.

"we will be judged by how we treat the least among us" Matthew 25:31-46, specifically verse 40

Regardless of what religious belief one may hail from in Hawaii with as many Gods today as we had hundreds of years ago, the above biblical quote remains as true today as it did to those who managed the Puuhonua of yesteryear. Considering Aloha is part of Hawaii's constitution literally and proverbially, it would be a crime not to support this bill and provide financially for the changes to the Department of Corrections procedures and added responsibilities.

Aloha,

Deb

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 3:14:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in **strong support** of HB1769, which requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally return committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions to in-state correctional facilities and to report regularly to the Legislature on this process.

This bill represents a long-overdue commitment to bringing our incarcerated family members home, where they can maintain connections to their communities, access rehabilitation services, and prepare for successful reentry.

**A Practice Rooted in Expediency, Not Justice**

For over two decades, Hawai‘i has shipped its incarcerated citizens thousands of miles away to private, out-of-state prisons—primarily operated by CoreCivic (formerly Corrections Corporation of America) in Arizona and other mainland states. What began as a temporary solution to overcrowding has become a permanent exile. At the height of this practice, the state was spending more than **\$50 million annually** on contracts with private, out-of-state facilities.

But the costs of this arrangement go far beyond dollars. When we incarcerate people in distant states, we sever them from their families, their support networks, and any realistic opportunity for rehabilitation. Children cannot visit their parents. Kūpuna cannot connect with their loved ones. And when individuals are eventually released—often with no advance return to Hawai‘i—they are dropped into communities they have not seen in years with no support, no housing, and no meaningful preparation for reentry.

**Building on Existing Law**

Hawai‘i law already recognizes that out-of-state incarceration is harmful and that returning inmates home before release is essential. Section 353H-7 of the Hawai‘i Revised Statutes requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to return Hawai‘i inmates held in out-of-state prisons **at least one year prior to the inmate's parole or release date** so they can participate in reentry programs on the island where they have the most support.

The law provides that this does not prevent the return of inmates with less than one year left of their sentence, and it requires annual reports to the Legislature on any inmates not returned, with explanations for noncompliance.

Yet despite this clear statutory mandate, compliance has been inconsistent at best. As the Legislature recognized in House Concurrent Resolution 153 (2025), previous efforts intended to prevent the transfer of individuals with strong community ties have not been adequately followed, leading to a loss of focus on rehabilitation and community reintegration. Inmates are still being held thousands of miles away from their families, their communities, and their futures.

### **What HB1769 Does**

HB1769 strengthens and clarifies this existing mandate by requiring the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to **incrementally return committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions to in-state correctional facilities.**

Critically, the bill requires reports to the Legislature, ensuring transparency and accountability in the return process. This reporting mechanism is essential—it allows the Legislature and the public to track progress and hold the Department accountable for compliance.

### **Why Returning Inmates Home Matters**

The case for bringing our incarcerated loved ones home is rooted in rehabilitation, public safety, and basic humanity:

- **Family connections are essential to successful reentry.** Incarcerated individuals who maintain regular contact with family are significantly less likely to reoffend after release. Shipping people thousands of miles away destroys those connections.
- **Reentry programs are location-specific.** Preparing for release requires access to programs and services on the island where a person will actually live. An inmate in Arizona cannot access housing assistance, job training, or substance abuse treatment in Wai‘anae.
- **Oversight and accountability are compromised in private, out-of-state facilities.** These facilities operate with far less transparency than in-state public prisons. Lawsuits and investigative reports have documented inadequate medical care, dangerous conditions, and insufficient programming in private prisons across the country. A 2008 law requiring access to information about these facilities was a step forward, but the fundamental problem remains: we cannot adequately oversee facilities we cannot visit .
- **The financial costs are staggering, with little to show for it.** Spending more than \$50 million annually on private, out-of-state prisons is a poor investment in public safety. That money would be far better spent on in-state facilities, community-based reentry programs, and alternatives to incarceration that actually reduce recidivism.

### **A Measured, Incremental Approach**

HB1769 does not demand an immediate, impossible return of every inmate overnight. It requires an **incremental** approach—a deliberate, phased plan to bring our people home. This is both practical and responsible. It allows the Department to plan, to identify appropriate in-state placements, and to ensure that returning inmates have the support they need upon arrival.

The bill also does not mandate the return of inmates who are participating in reentry programs in mainland facilities and consent to remain, consistent with the existing protections in Section 353H-7. It simply requires that the Department move with purpose toward ending the shameful practice of exiling our incarcerated citizens to private prisons thousands of miles away.

For over 20 years, Hawai‘i has outsourced its responsibility to care for and rehabilitate incarcerated individuals. We have paid private corporations billions of dollars to hold our family members in facilities we cannot adequately oversee. We have severed people from their communities and then wondered why reentry is so difficult.

HB1769 begins to undo this harm. It is a commitment to bringing our people home, to honoring the connections that make rehabilitation possible, and to investing in a corrections system that prioritizes safety, accountability, and second chances.

I urge this committee to pass HB1769.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



**Carrie Ann Shiota**  
**Attorney at Law**

Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Moriwake, Vice Chair  
Wednesday, April 1, 2026  
10:03 A.M.  
Conference Room 211

**Support: HB1769 HD2 SD1 Relating to Correctional Facilities**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwake and Committee Members:

My name is Carrie Ann Shiota, and I am an attorney and justice advocate writing in strong support of **H.B. 1769 HD2 SD1 Relating to Correctional Facilities with proposed amendments**. This vital measure mandates an important public policy, mandating the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to systematically reduce the number of individuals incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. Additionally, this bill requires DCR to submit 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup>[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).

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 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.”<sup>2</sup>

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.

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<sup>2</sup>[https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/Session2025/Testimony/HCR153\\_TESTIMONY\\_PSM\\_04-11-25\\_.PDF](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/Session2025/Testimony/HCR153_TESTIMONY_PSM_04-11-25_.PDF) (page 1).

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

<b>Correctional Facility</b>	<b>Design Capacity</b>	<b>Operational Capacity</b>	<b>Current Total</b>
Kūlanī 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 in the Total Number of People at Saguaro vs. Empty Beds in Hawai'i: 372**

Moreover, the Oversight Commission's consistent reports confirm that work furlough programs under the control of DCR 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.

***Hawai'i Out-of-State Transfers Over 30 Years***

<b>Hawai'i</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2026</b>
	300	1780	2014	1371	999	799

As the data shows, Hawai'i has reduced the number of people transferred to out-of-state private prisons. However, we need to set robust requirements for the Department of Corrections to follow this mandate, and work collaboratively with other state systems to divert more people from our jails and prisons that would be better served with community based infrastructure and care.

### ***Other States Have Reduced Out-of-State Prisoner Transfers***

While Hawai'i has reduced out-of-state transfers, it has not reduced its rates comparable to other states - such as Vermont, Arkansas and California.

Significantly, California has ended operations in all out-of-state facilities and has exited all for-profit contract prisons, in line with Governor Gavin Newsom's commitment to reduce the state's reliance on out-of-state and private prisons.

<https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/prison-closures/>

<b>State</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
Hawai'i	300	1780	2014		1371	999	799
Vermont		280	800		241	120 ('23)	128
California		80 ('26)		10,400	5226	0	0
Arkansas		4,900			336		0

Bringing incarcerated individuals closer to home is vital for maintaining family and community bonds, as well as a connection to the 'aina and cultural roots. These ties are essential for successful reintegration and reducing recidivism. By mandating a reduction in transfers, we prioritize systemic reform, uphold our legal responsibilities, and ensure that accountability and rehabilitation—rather than corporate profit—remain the guiding principles of our justice system.

Finally, we begin the long overdue process of divesting from Core Civic, a corporation that earns profits for shareholders, by fueling mass incarceration and mass detention of immigrants.

For these reasons, I respectfully request you to pass **HB 1769 HD2 SD1 Relating to Correctional Facilities with the requested amendments**. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Carrie Ann Shirota*

Carrie Ann Shirota, Esq.  
Honolulu, Hawaii

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

**LATE**

HEARING:

Wednesday, April 1, 2026 at 10:03 am, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF HB 1769, HD2, SD1 - RELATING TO CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Senator Hashimoto for my district, Senator DeCoite of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a lawyer licensed for over 25 years in the state of Hawai'i. I write you today in **strong support with comments on HB 1769, HD2, SD1**, Relating to Correctional Facilities, which requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally return committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions to in-state correctional facilities, and requires reports to the Legislature.

Native Hawaiians make up the highest percentage of people incarcerated in out-of-state facilities.<sup>1</sup> Incarcerating community members thousands of miles away separates them from family, community, and the land. This separation causes harmful cultural disconnection and family disruption. It also undermines culturally appropriate rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

While in-state facility capacity is limited, a substantial portion of people in custody are held pretrial or are primarily impacted by substance use and mental health needs that would better be served outside our correctional system. What is needed is not mainland incarceration, but investment in diversion, treatment, reentry support, and fair sentencing measures that safely reduce correctional populations over time. As a community we must invest in reentry services, treatment, diversion, and proportional sentencing rather than overly punitive approaches that increase prison and jail populations without improving public safety. I **strongly support the intent of HB1769, HD2, SD1**, especially the timeline through 2029, but find the phased reduction timeline presented of 5% a year beginning on July 1, 2031 too limited. Doing the math, it would take until July 1, 2041, over fifteen years, for just 80% of those incarcerated on the mainland to be returned home. **I believe that, in tandem with the other bills related to compassionate release and pre-trial detention, we can find a way to bring our community members home to Hawai'i more expeditiously.**

I appreciate your time considering this measure.

Mahalo,

Christine Andrews, JD  
Wailuku, Maui

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<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ir_final_web_rev.pdf)

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 10:49:41 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jotis Russell-Christian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

- Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:

By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

- Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and

perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

- Balanced Implementation with Oversight:

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jotis Russell-Christian

jotisonkauai@gmail.com

Kapahulu, O‘ahu

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 10:49:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Camille Rodrigues	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

**Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:**

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

**Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:**

By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

**Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:**

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

**Balanced Implementation with Oversight:**

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Camille Rodrigues

Kailua, Oahu, Hawaii

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 10:52:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
P Hauoli'ipo Wright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their 'ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

- Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:

By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

- Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai'i's criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

- Balanced Implementation with Oversight:

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

- P Hau'oli ipo Wright / 808-268-9974 / Moku o Keawe

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 10:52:57 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support



**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 11:01:01 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nanea Lo, and I am writing in strong support of HB1769 HD2.

This measure represents a critical and long-overdue step toward bringing our po‘e ho‘iho‘i ‘ia home and addressing the deep, generational harm caused by out-of-state incarceration. For decades, Hawai‘i has relied on private, mainland facilities to house individuals from our communities—separating them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems that are essential for healing and successful reintegration.

Native Hawaiians continue to be disproportionately impacted by this system. The continued use of out-of-state facilities not only perpetuates this inequity, but also undermines rehabilitation by isolating individuals from the very relationships and cultural grounding that can support their return home.

HB1769 HD2 acknowledges these harms and sets a clear, incremental pathway to reduce and ultimately end the use of out-of-state incarceration. Importantly, it also ensures transparency and accountability through required reporting to the Legislature—something that has been lacking for far too long.

Bringing our po‘e back to Hawai‘i is not only a matter of geography—it is a matter of justice, dignity, and kuleana. When individuals are kept closer to home, they have greater access to family visitation, culturally grounded programming, and reentry support systems that are proven to reduce recidivism and strengthen communities.

This bill is about restoring connection, improving outcomes, and honoring our responsibility to care for one another.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Member

Hawai'i Workers Center Board Member

Clean Elections Hawai'i Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

350 Hawai'i Member

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Tax Fairness Coalition Member

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 11:06:17 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sherry Broder	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairman Dela Cruz and Committee Members, I am submitting this testimony in strong support of 1769 HB RELATING TO CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES. The State criminal justice system and its prisons need improvements in many areas. However, some progress has been made on the issue of fairness and justice in recent years. Incarcerating prisoners in private for profit prisons on the mainland is cruel. Those prisoners can no longer see family and friends and are separated from local culture. Change is very much needed. Mahalo for your consideration of this important matter.

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 11:11:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James O. Kuloloio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in **support of HB1769 HD2 SD1** relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

- Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:

By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

- Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and

perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

- Balanced Implementation with Oversight:

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **pass HB1769 HD2 SD1**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

James O. Kuloloio

Opio808@hotmail.com

Maui Islanf

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 11:12:43 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Inam Rahman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support with Amendments

HB1769 HD2 SD1 – Relating to Correctional Facilities

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Dr. Inam U. Rahman, MD, a physician and long-time West O‘ahu resident. I respectfully support HB1769 HD2 SD1 with important amendments to ensure effective, safe, and fiscally responsible implementation.

**WHY I SUPPORT THIS BILL**

The intent of this measure is both humane and necessary.

For many individuals incarcerated in out-of-state facilities, the distance from Hawai‘i means separation from ‘ohana, culture, and community—factors that are essential for rehabilitation and successful reintegration.

As a physician, I have seen how social support systems directly impact health outcomes, mental stability, and long-term recovery. When individuals are isolated thousands of miles away, continuity of care suffers, and the likelihood of successful reentry declines.

This issue disproportionately impacts Native Hawaiians, who are overrepresented in out-of-state incarceration, further compounding existing disparities.

**NEED FOR AMENDMENTS**

While the goal is sound, implementation must be carefully structured to avoid unintended consequences.

### 1. Link Reduction to Capacity Benchmarks

Require that reductions in out-of-state incarceration be tied to:

- Verified in-state bed capacity
- Safe staffing ratios
- Facility readiness

Prevents overcrowding and protects both inmates and staff

### 2. Require Fiscal Impact & Funding Plan

Mandate:

- A detailed cost analysis
- Identification of funding sources

Ensures sustainability without placing undue strain on the state budget.

### 3. Strengthen Healthcare & Behavioral Health Infrastructure

Require the Department to report on:

- Access to medical and mental health services
- Plans to address workforce shortages

Critical for a population with high chronic disease and behavioral health needs

#### 4. Invest in Reentry & Diversion Programs

Include parallel investment in:

- Community-based reentry programs
- Substance abuse and mental health diversion
- Workforce training aligned with Hawai'i's economy

Reduces recidivism and long-term correctional costs

#### 5. Enhance Reporting & Accountability

Expand reporting requirements to include:

- Recidivism rates
- Health outcomes
- Facility capacity and staffing levels

Provides measurable outcomes—not just numerical reduction

## 6. Maintain Emergency Flexibility

Allow limited continued use of out-of-state facilities for:

- Temporary overflow situations
- Emergency capacity needs

Ensures public safety is not compromised during transition

## CONCLUSION

HB1769 HD2 SD1 takes an important step toward bringing our people home and addressing long-standing inequities in our correctional system.

However, good policy must be matched with good planning.

With the amendments outlined above, this measure can:

- Improve rehabilitation outcomes
- Protect public safety
- Ensure fiscal responsibility
- Strengthen trust in our system

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure with amendments.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify

Dr. Inam Rahman, MD

West O‘ahu (Waipahū, ‘Ewa Beach, Pearl City

inamr01@gmail.com

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 11:16:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nicholas Chagnon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwake and Committee Members:

My name is Nicholas Chagnon, and I am professor at UH West O‘ahu who specializes in criminology, writing in strong support of H.B. 1769 HD2 SD1 Relating to Correctional Facilities. It is of vital importance that we end the harmful practice of sending our community members out of state to serve prison sentences. Voluminous research shows that such a practice increases the likelihood of inmates experiencing violence and unconstitutional deprivations while incarcerated, and this practice increases the chances of recidivism. Ultimately, it undermines public safety. We must instead employ practices that will reduce our prison population and use alternatives like restorative justice to hold accountable those who do harm to our community.

Sincerely,

Nicholas J. Chagnon, PhD

Assistant Professor of Sociology

Social Sciences Divison, UH West O‘ahu

**LATE**

To: Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee  
Re: HB1769 HD2 – Relating to Correctional Facilities  
Position: Strong Support

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

My name is R. Kana'iaupuni Gomes, and I am a Native Hawaiian and a private citizen writing in **strong support** of HB1769 HD2, which requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of Hawai'i residents incarcerated in private, out-of-state prisons and return them to in-state correctional facilities.

HB1769 HD2 is an important step toward ending Hawai'i's harmful reliance on private, for-profit prisons on the continent. These facilities have been documented by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General to suffer from serious safety and security deficiencies, including higher rates of violence and weaker oversight than government-run facilities. Keeping our people in distant, for-profit prisons separates them from 'ohana, culture, language, spiritual communities, and legal counsel, undermining their rehabilitation and chances for successful reentry. Returning incarcerated Hawai'i residents home is essential for family unity, healing, and true public safety.

I support HB1769 HD2's core structure: a phased, incremental reduction in the use of private, out-of-state prisons, combined with annual reports to the Legislature. This framework creates accountability while allowing the Department to plan responsibly, align resources, and prioritize in-state alternatives. It reflects the growing consensus, including the recommendations of the HCR 85 task force and the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission, that warehousing people far from home has not improved safety and carries immense fiscal and social costs for our communities.

At the same time, I respectfully urge the Committee to strengthen HB1769 HD2 so that it can fully achieve its mission. I ask you to consider the following improvements:

1. Tie reductions to in-state capacity and programming benchmarks
  - Establish a flexible schedule that links the reduction of private, out-of-state prison use to clearly defined in-state capacity and programming benchmarks, rather than fixed dates alone. For example, require the Department to show progress in facility readiness, staffing levels, and availability of treatment, education, and reentry services for each phase of returns.
  - Require the Department to submit a public "Reintegration of Mainland-Held Persons Plan" detailing how facilities will be prepared, how staff will be recruited and supported, and how the Department will coordinate with community-based service providers to receive returning individuals.
2. Strengthen timelines, interim milestones, and corrective actions

- Keep the bill's long-term targets but add clearer annual benchmarks so that progress can be monitored each year rather than only at the end of the period.
  - When benchmarks are not met, require the Department to submit a corrective-action plan to the Legislature that explains the shortfall and lays out concrete steps and timelines to get back on track. This turns reporting from a descriptive exercise into a tool for real accountability.
3. Close privatization loopholes
- Clarify that the State's goal is to end reliance on private, for-profit prisons, both out of state and in Hawai'i. Without this language, there is a risk that out-of-state contracts could be replaced with in-state private or public-private partnership prisons, or that similar mainland arrangements could be renewed under different terms.
  - The bill could explicitly restrict new or expanded contracts with private correctional facilities, allowing only narrow, time-limited emergencies subject to explicit legislative approval.
4. Hard-wire rehabilitation and reentry into the statute
- Require the Department's annual reports to include data on access to and outcomes from programming for people who have been returned from private, out-of-state prisons, including substance use treatment, mental health care, education, vocational training, and culturally grounded programs.
  - Prioritize support for community-based, culturally appropriate, and Native Hawaiian-led services that can address trauma, strengthen family and community ties, and reduce recidivism. This will help ensure that HB1769 HD2 is not just about where people are held, but about how they are supported to change their lives.
5. Enhance transparency and independent oversight
- Require that the annual reports be detailed and disaggregated, including data by race, gender, age, island, and offense type, as well as information on institutional safety and reentry outcomes for people returned from the continent.
  - Formalize a role for the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission in reviewing the Department's plans and reports under this bill and in providing public recommendations to the Legislature. Including voices from formerly incarcerated people and 'ohana affected by continent transfers would further strengthen oversight and trust.

By returning our people home, reducing reliance on private, for-profit prisons, and centering accountability and rehabilitation, HB1769 HD2 can move Hawai'i toward a more pono, effective, and humane correctional system. I urge you to pass this measure with the strengthening amendments described.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB1769 HD2.

Me ke aloha,

R. Kana'iaupuni Gomes

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 11:49:51 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carla Allison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwake and Committee Members

My name is Carla Allison and, as a Hawai'i resident and voter, deeply concerned for the public safety and civil liberties of all the people of Hawai'i, **I strongly support HB 1769 HD2 Relating to Correctional Facilities.**

The practice of out-of-state transfers to for profit prisons is harmful and conflicts with our Department of Corrections' mission to provide "comprehensive rehabilitative, holistic, and wraparound re-entry services, including culturally based approaches, to persons sentenced to our custody and care with professionalism, integrity, respect, and fairness."

Worst of all, it separates people, disproportionately Native Hawaiians, from their families, land, culture, and community, and exposes individuals to further violence and gang culture in the U.S. continent.

This bill represents a balanced approach to reducing this harmful practice while maintaining legislative oversight on implementation.

Please take a stand for our community by **supporting and passing 1769 HD2.**

Thank you for your consideration,

Carla Allison – Honolulu

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 12:20:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melinda Dallass	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill and the effort to bring those who are incarcerated back to their homes, especially those who are native to this land. It is an egregious act to incarcerate at the rate the state government of Hawai'i does and then to separate Kanaka from their own homeland on top of that, reducing the chances of any rehabilitation or reintegration into their communities. We absolutely must stop these continuing acts of violence and neglect against our own citizens, and hold those who stand to make profit off the imprisonment of those who have already been victimized by systematic theft of their land and resources. Generating profit off of this system is abhorrent and must be stopped. Thank you for your time and consideration in this.

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 12:32:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Quartero	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

**Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:** This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

**Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:** By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

**Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:** Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

**Balanced Implementation with Oversight:** This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Robert Quartero



**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 12:40:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brandee Yuen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their 'ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:

By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

#### Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai'i's criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

#### Balanced Implementation with Oversight:

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Brandee Yuen

bnyuen79@gmail.com

808-457-2508

Pearl city, Oahu

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 1:24:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- **Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:**

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

- **Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:**

By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

- **Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:**

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

- **Balanced Implementation with Oversight:**

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jennifer Crawford

Nānākuli, O'ahu

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 1:32:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shyla C Lafaele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

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Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and

perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

- Balanced Implementation with Oversight:

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Shyla C. Lafaale

808-979-5956

Honolulu, Hawaii.

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 2:05:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Makaiwa kanui	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

- Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:

By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

- Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and

perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

- Balanced Implementation with Oversight:

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Makaiwa Kanui

(808)990-8754

‘Ōla‘a, Hawai‘i

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 2:20:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelli Soileau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in **support of HB1769 HD2 SD1** relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- **Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:**  
This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.
- **Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:**  
By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.
- **Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:**  
Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.
- **Balanced Implementation with Oversight:**  
This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **pass HB1769 HD2 SD1**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kelli Soileau  
Kāneʻohe, Oʻahu

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 2:25:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kylie Borges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Kylie and I'm a Kanaka from Big Island (96778), currently residing in California (95112). I am writing in **support** of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their 'ohana, culture, and support systems. All extant research highlights how being connected to your community and culture is necessary to reduce recidivism and ensures incarcerated people have a chance to actually reintegrate into their communities. Hawai'i ships out so many more incarcerated people to continent-based prisons than ANY OTHER STATE IN THE US, and so the carceral system in Hawai'i serves as one of the worst contributors to forced displacement. This measure helps reverse the harmful trend of extracting people from their communities.

- Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai'i's criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

- Balanced Implementation with Oversight:

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For all these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kylie B.

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 2:40:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rene Kehau Schofield	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities.

Our kanaka 'oiwi Native Hawaiian cousins also suffer the impact of Generational Trauma on mental health, often bringing them to prisons to begin with. There is no accountability when these prisoners are sent away, and clearly no support system thousands of miles from their 'aina or their 'Ohana, whose Aloha and Malama are so crucial to avoid recidivation and reincarnation.

My brother, now 70 years old and in fragile health, is currently serving time in Halawa, not in Maui, where his daughters and Ohana can malama him. This is a problem. It is in the best interest of our Native Hawaiian incarcerated prisoners to be here in Hawaii serving our their sentences in their 'Aina and culture. If our state government is committed to our own Kanaka 'Oiwī sons, even while serving their sentences for bad decisions, be sure their well being is at forefront of your decision making, not only profit for profit prison systems. We need accountability and transparency.

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 for the following reasons:

- Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:

The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their 'ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps to being the process of reversing that harmful trend.

- Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:

By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

- Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

- Balanced Implementation with Oversight:

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Rene Kehaulani Schofield

(808)494-9540

15-2784 Maiko Street

Pahoa HI 96778

[rene.schofield@gmail.com](mailto:rene.schofield@gmail.com)

Pahoa, Hawaii ( Hawaii Island

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 3:10:10 PM  
Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members

I SUPPORT HB1769 HD SD1. We need to bring the folks home.

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 3:53:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Vanessa Lee Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

- Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:

By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

- Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai'i's criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

- **Balanced Implementation with Oversight:**

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Vanessa Lee Miller

808-935-1460

Hilo, Hawaii

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 4:49:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 7:05:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Luanna Peterson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwake, and Committee Members:

My name is Luanna Peterson, and I am writing in strong support of H.B. 1769 HD2 SD1 Relating to Correctional Facilities, with proposed amendments. I come to this issue as someone who is deeply principle-oriented and committed to ensuring that our policies reflect the values we claim to uphold. I believe in accountability, fairness, and the responsibility we carry as a community to care for our people, not export them.

For decades, Hawai‘i has relied on the practice of sending our incarcerated population to private, out-of-state prisons. What began as a temporary measure has become a normalized system that separates families, disconnects people from their communities, and, for Native Hawaiians, severs ties to ‘āina and cultural identity. This is a moral inconsistency.

We say we value rehabilitation, family unity, and community-based solutions. Yet we continue to invest public dollars into a system that does the opposite. The continued use of private, for-profit prisons—particularly through contracts with CoreCivic—reflects a pattern of compromise, even when the available evidence clearly points us in a different direction. To me, that is where the real harm lies: in knowing better, but choosing not to act accordingly.

The data is clear. Private prisons have higher rates of violence, fewer rehabilitative programs, and hidden long-term costs. At the same time, Hawai‘i has underutilized in-state capacity and failed to fully implement proven, data-driven reforms that would reduce incarceration overall. We are not without options—we are simply not aligning our actions with our stated values.

I believe strongly that policy should be grounded in integrity. If we say we care about people, about safety, about rehabilitation, then our systems must reflect that consistently. H.B. 1769 offers a necessary step toward that alignment by requiring the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to reduce reliance on out-of-state facilities and to be transparent in that process.

Bringing our people home is not just about geography—it is about restoring connection, dignity, and accountability within our own communities. It is about investing in solutions that work, rather than continuing practices that benefit corporations over people.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass H.B. 1769 HD2 SD1 with the proposed amendments.

Mahalo,

Luanna Peterson

Honolulu, HI

**LATE**

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in **support of HB1769 HD2 SD1** relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- **Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:**

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their 'ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

- **Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:**

By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

- **Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:**

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai'i's criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

- **Balanced Implementation with Oversight:**

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **pass HB1769 HD2 SD1**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Lena Carver  
Keaau, Hawaii

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 7:40:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Julia Estigoy-Kahoonei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

- Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:

By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

- Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and

perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

- Balanced Implementation with Oversight:

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Julia Estigoy-Kaho'onei

jestigoyk@outlook.com

Moku o Keawe

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 10:09:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
sunnie Kupahu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in **support of HB1769 HD2 SD1** relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- **Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:**  
This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.
- **Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:**  
By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.
- **Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:**  
Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.
- **Balanced Implementation with Oversight:**  
This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **pass HB1769 HD2 SD1**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sunnie Kupahu

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 6:10:19 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Allen Chinn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

- **Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:**

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ‘ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

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- **Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:**

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawai‘i’s criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and

perpetuating trauma. This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

- Balanced Implementation with Oversight:

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Allen Chinn

101 Aupuni St #720

Hilo, HI

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 6:24:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kaylene Sheldon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of HB1769 HD2 SD1 relating to correctional facilities, for the following reasons:

**Reducing Harmful Out-of-State Incarceration:**

This bill requires the Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally reduce the number of committed felons incarcerated in private, out-of-state correctional institutions. The current practice of transferring individuals far from their homes separates them from their ohana, culture, and support systems. These factors are essential to rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. This measure helps reverse that harmful trend.

**Supporting Rehabilitation and Community Stability:**

By bringing more individuals back into in-state correctional facilities over time, the bill promotes better access to culturally appropriate programming, family support, and community-based reentry resources. Research and community testimony have shown that maintaining connections to home and culture can significantly reduce recidivism and support long-term public safety outcomes.

**Addressing Structural Inequities and Disproportionate Impacts:**

Native Hawaiians and other disproportionately impacted communities are overrepresented at every stage of Hawaii's criminal legal system. Out-of-state incarceration compounds historical and systemic inequities by further distancing individuals from their communities and perpetuating trauma.

Native Hawaiian Proportion: Native Hawaiians (including those identifying as Part-Hawaiian) consistently make up the largest ethnic group in out-of-state transit. While they represent roughly 21-24% of Hawaii's general population, they account for approximately 39-43% of the total incarcerated population.

This bill acknowledges those disparities and takes a practical step toward addressing them.

Balanced Implementation with Oversight:

This bill establishes a phased reduction allowing the Department to manage capacity and logistical transitions responsibly. The requirement for periodic reporting to the Legislature also ensures transparency and oversight throughout implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1769 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Me kealoha pumehana,

Kaylene Kauwila Sheldon

Email: [kauwilamahina@gmail.com](mailto:kauwilamahina@gmail.com)

Ka'a'awa, Hawai'i

**LATE**

**HB-1769-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 8:22:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sherri-Anne Kamaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please bring them home so they can see their ohana.