

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
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No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2289, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO THE EXPENDITURE CEILING ON THE AUTOMATED VICTIM  
INFORMATION AND NOTIFICATION SYSTEM SPECIAL FUND.

by

Tommy Johnson, Director  
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

House Committee on Finance  
Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 26, 2026, 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Via Video Conference

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) **strongly supports** House Bill (HB) 2289, House Draft (HD) 1, which seeks to remove the \$600,000 annual expenditure ceiling on the Automated Victim Information and Notification System Special Fund to address rising program costs and growing victim service demands. This change is necessary to ensure uninterrupted notifications and continued operational flexibility.

DCR is statutorily obligated to establish and operate the Statewide Automated Victim Information Notification (SAVIN) system which is administered by DCR's Victim Notification Services Office (VNSO). Under HRS §353-136(d), the SAVIN Special Fund must be used exclusively for development and operating expenses of the system, including salaries, and fringe benefits of positions as authorized by the legislature. Victims frequently contact SAVIN (24/7, 365 days per year) and DCR's VNSO for more than just notifications but also to seek information and connections to support services. Essential functions such as statewide SAVIN system monitoring, rapid issue resolution, and follow-up on victim inquiries may be compromised, potentially causing additional harm should there be even a minor delay or interruption of these services.

HB 2289, HD 1 Relating to the Expenditure Ceiling on the Automated  
Victim Information and Notification System Special Fund.

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Steady collective bargaining unit increases, rising costs of the SAVIN system contract, rent and lease expenses, including telephone and internet service charges continue to reduce available operating funds, limiting the program's ability to advance. Under the current annual expenditure cap, we are unable to meet rising costs, maintain staffing levels, and preserve critical infrastructure, including system maintenance and office space. Eliminating the cap would allow VNSO to responsibly use available special funds as it was intended, to meet DCR's statutory mandate to efficiently operate the statewide SAVIN system.

Increasing victim registrations and escalating operational expenses, without the flexibility to address them expeditiously, directly threaten service reliability and victims' trust. HB 2289, HD 1 is a necessary adjustment and provides a practical, fiscally responsible solution to ensure DCR can continue its vital mission of protecting victims and strengthening public safety. We respectfully urge you to pass this measure and provide DCR's VNSO with the flexibility it needs to serve Hawai'i communities effectively.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support** of HB 2289, HD 1.

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**THE HONORABLE CHRIS TODD, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State of Hawai'i**

February 25, 2026

**RE: H.B. 2289; RELATING TO THE EXPENDITURE CEILING ON THE  
AUTOMATED VICTIM INFORMATION AND NOTIFICATION SYSTEM SPECIAL  
FUND.**

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the House Committee on Finance, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu submits the following testimony in **support** of H.B. 2289.

H.B. 2289 removes the outdated \$600,000 annual expenditure ceiling on the Automated Victim Information and Notification System (SAVIN) Special Fund. This measure is essential to ensuring that crime victims receive the timely, reliable notifications they deserve. Each notification also reminds victims that our community cares about them and their safety.

When victims are informed of custody changes, court proceedings, and parole hearings, they can make informed decisions about their safety and participate meaningfully in the justice process. The SAVIN system is not merely administrative—it is a lifeline for victims navigating the often overwhelming criminal justice system.

The dramatic increase in victim registration reflects both growing public awareness and, regrettably, the persistent reality of crime in our community. Yet while demand has intensified, the statutory expenditure cap has remained frozen, creating an untenable situation that threatens service continuity.

From a prosecutorial perspective, reliable victim notification directly supports successful prosecutions. Informed victims are empowered victims. They attend hearings, provide crucial testimony, and cooperate throughout proceedings. When notification systems fail, we risk losing victim engagement—and with it, cases that should result in accountability and justice.

Victim notification serves public safety. By registering for alerts about offenders in their neighborhoods, victims and witnesses can take appropriate precautions. This proactive approach to safety is especially vital for domestic violence survivors and other vulnerable populations facing ongoing risk.

We urge this committee to recognize that protecting victims is not an area for austerity. The expenditure ceiling made sense when originally enacted, but circumstances have evolved dramatically. Removing this outdated restriction is a modest but essential investment in victim rights, public safety, and the integrity of our justice system.

The Department urges this Committee to pass H.B. 2289.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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## OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2289 HD1

#### A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE EXPENDITURE CEILING ON THE AUTOMATED VICTIM INFORMATION AND NOTIFICATION SYSTEM SPECIAL FUND

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair  
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.  
Via Videoconference  
State Capitol Conference Room 308  
415 South Beretania Street

Honorable Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi and Members of the Committee on Finance The County of Hawai'i, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney submits the following testimony **in strong support** of House Bill 2289 House Draft 1.

H.B. 2289 HD1 was drafted with the intent to remove the \$600,000 annual expenditure ceiling on Hawai'i's Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification System ("SAVIN") Special Fund to address rising program costs and growing victim service demands.

SAVIN offers victims, law enforcement, and all concerned citizens free, anonymous, and confidential access to timely information and notification on the custody and parole status of offenders under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Registered users receive notifications via email, text, phone call, and/or in-app. Live operator assistance is always available to field any questions the users may have. Registration information is not shared with offenders.

It often times seems as though our criminal justice system places greater emphasis and focus on offenders. We need more legislation and programs like SAVIN that support victims, their healing, crime prevention awareness, and promote public safety.

H.B. 2289 HD1 supports the funding necessary to continue to improve Hawai'i's victim notification and services, all the while contributing to a safer and healthier Hawai'i. For the foregoing reasons, the County of Hawai'i, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney **strongly supports** the passage of H.B. 2289 HD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

**JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII – KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII  
**CRIME VICTIM COMPENSATION  
COMMISSION**

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**JO KAMAE BYRNE**  
Commissioner

**PAMELA FERGUSON-BREY**  
Executive Director

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2289, HD1  
RELATING TO THE EXPENDITURE CEILING ON THE AUTOMATED VICTIM INFORMATION AND  
NOTIFICATION SYSTEM SPECIAL FUND

by

Pamela Ferguson-Brey, Executive Director  
Crime Victim Compensation Commission

House Committee on Finance  
Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 26, 2026; 2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Good afternoon Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance. Thank you for providing the Crime Victim Compensation Commission (“Commission”) with the opportunity to testify before you today in strong support of House Bill 2289, HD1. HB 2289, HD1, removes the \$600,000 annual expenditure ceiling on the Automated Victim Information and Notification (SAVIN) system special fund to address rising program costs and growing victim service demands. Without this increase, the SAVIN program will not be able to serve the rising demand of victims and agencies that rely on timely notifications.

The Commission provides compensation for victims of violent crime to pay un-reimbursed expenses for crime-related losses due to physical or mental injury or death. In addition, the Commission serves on and formerly chaired the SAVIN Governance Committee, which guides the SAVIN program in Hawai'i. The Governance Committee is comprised of county victim service providers and advocates, crime victims, technology experts, and members of the criminal justice community.

The SAVIN program has provided tens of thousands of notifications to crime victims, witnesses, survivors, victim service providers, law enforcement agencies, and concerned members of the public with timely information about changes in an offender's custody status. The ability for crime victims to have input in decision making about an offender's release,

the impact of the offender's release on the victim's safety, as well as on the safety of the public, is dependent on timely notification which the SAVIN program provides.

In order to meet rising demand and support victims and survivors during the post-conviction process, it is necessary to remove the current expenditure ceiling. Since FY 2023, registrations in the SAVIN system have increased by 38.9% with 16,424 new registrations in 2 years. The rising cost of the SAVIN system and escalating operational expenses driven in part by collective bargaining increases, will continue to undermine the SAVIN program's funding base unless the ceiling is removed.

Thank you for providing the Commission with the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 2289, HD1.



February 25, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT of HB2289 HD1**, Relating to the Expenditure Ceiling on the Automated Victim Information and Notification System Special Fund

**To:** Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Finance

**From:** Llasmin Chaîne, LSW, Executive Director, Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

**Re:** Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2289 HD1, Relating to the Expenditure Ceiling on the Automated Victim Information and Notification System Special Fund

Hearing: Thursday, February 26, 2026, 2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women is dedicated to advancing the rights, safety, and well-being of women and girls across Hawaii. The Commission **supports HB2289 HD1** because it **directly affects the resources available to support victims**, many of whom are women impacted by crime and gender-based violence, and it **addresses the capacity of the Automated Victim Information and Notification System (AVIN) to meet increasing demands for victim services**. Ensuring timely, reliable information and notification is essential for empowering survivors, enabling their successful safety planning, upholding their rights to information, and assisting in their recovery.

Removing the annual expenditure ceiling on the AVIN System Special Fund will allow the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to more effectively address increasing program costs and the expanding needs of victims. As the demand for victim services grows, maintaining an arbitrary funding cap hinders the system's ability to provide consistent and comprehensive support. **National best practices emphasize the importance of robust victim notification systems as a critical component of trauma-informed care and public safety**. This is especially relevant for women, who are disproportionately affected by certain types of crime and who rely on timely notifications for their safety and peace of mind.

The Commission recognizes that expanding funding flexibility can help ensure that the AVIN System remains responsive to evolving technology, security requirements, and the diverse needs of victims. This aligns with **our commitment to advocating for policies that prioritize victim safety, health, and access to information**.

The Commission appreciates the Legislature's attention to the needs of survivors and supports efforts to strengthen the state's victim notification infrastructure. We respectfully urge this Committee to **pass HB2289 HD1**, repealing the expenditure ceiling on the AVIN System Special Fund. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

Dennis M. Dunn

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**TO: Representative Chris Todd, Chair**

**Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair**

**House Committee on Finance**

**RE: HB 2289, H.D. 1, RELATING TO THE EXPENDITURE CEILING ON THE  
AUTOMATED VICTIM INFORMATION AND NOTIFICATION SYSTEM SPECIAL FUND**

**HEARING: Thursday, February 26, 2026, 2:00 p.m.**

**Conference Room 308**

Good afternoon, Chair Todd and Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance. I am providing testimony in **Strong Support of H.B. 2289, H.D. 1**. This Bill is intended to lift the current expenditure ceiling on the SAVIN Special Fund. The comments made in my testimony are drawn from my nearly 50 years of experience as an advocate for crime victims, forty-four of which were as an employee of the Honolulu Prosecuting Attorney's Office, serving as Director of the Victim Witness Kokua Services from 1985 to 2022.

The SAVIN Special Fund is critical funding source for SAVIN, the State's Automated Victim Notification System. The establishment of SAVIN by the Legislature in 2012 was a monumental accomplishment for crime victims in Hawaii as it ensured consistent and sustainable automated notifications about the custody status of individuals in the custody of the Department of Public Safety on a 24/7 basis. The SAVIN system ensures that critical information relating to victim safety is available to victims on a timely basis, allowing them to make important decisions and take timely actions to protect themselves from offenders who are being released

Thousands of crime victims depend daily on SAVIN notifications to prepare themselves to seek safety options when an offender is released from custody. Victim advocates also depend on this system to alert them that victims will need immediate safety planning assistance, crisis counseling, and emotional support. When SAVIN was first initiated in 2012 it may have made sense to have a \$600,000 annual expenditure cap., However, current rates of inflation and expanded needs for staff and equipment have left Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation struggling unnecessarily to meet the funding needs for a growing and changing SAVIN program, This change is needed to

sustain program development and improvement. The elimination of this arbitrary and outdated funding cap is essential for the efficient and effective operation of the SAVIN program. Please **support H.B. 2289, H.D. 1** as an effective means to accomplish this badly needed amendment to the SAVIN Special Fund.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.