

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



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

Ke Komikina Uku Luaahi Kalaima

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Executive Director

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2289
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 Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 12, 2026; 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Good afternoon Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs. 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. HB 2289 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.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
HAWAII PAROLING AUTHORITY
Ka 'Ākena Palola o Hawai'i
1177 Alakea Street, First Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

GENE DEMELLO JR.
CHAIRMAN

MILTON H. KOTSUBO
LINDA L. RICH
CHERYL E. INOUE
VACANT
MEMBERS

COREY J. REINCKE
ADMINISTRATOR

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HB 2289 RELATING TO THE EXPENDITURE CEILING
ON THE AUTOMATED VICTIM INFORMATION AND
NOTIFICATION SYSTEM SPECIAL FUND

by
Corey J. Reincke
Paroles and Pardons Administrator
Hawaii Paroling Authority

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice-Chair

Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325 – State Capitol

Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Paroling Authority (HPA) is in SUPPORT of House Bill 2289. Victims will be able to exercise their rights, or engage in safety planning, when receiving statutorily mandated notification about offender's escape/transfer/movement and/or parole release. This important system protects crime victims and the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of HB 2289. We will be available for any questions.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalu Kalaima
a Ho'oponopono Ola*
1177 Alakea Street
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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 2289
RELATING TO THE EXPENDITURE CEILING ON THE AUTOMATED VICTIM
INFORMATION AND NOTIFICATION SYSTEM SPECIAL FUND.

by

Tommy Johnson, Director
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 12, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 016 & Via Video Conference

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) **strongly supports** House Bill (HB) 2289, which seeks to remove the \$600,000 annual expenditure ceiling on the Automated Victim Information and Notification System (SAVIN) 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 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 Relating to the Expenditure Ceiling on the Automated Victim Information and Notification System Special Fund.

February 12, 2026

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Since the establishment of SAVIN under the DCR (then the Department of Public Safety) over a decade ago, there has been just one (1) increase in the annual expenditure cap, from \$300,000 to \$600,000, which included the approval of three (3) additional authorized SAVIN positions. Steady collective bargaining unit increases, rising costs of the SAVIN system contract, and rent and lease expenses, including telephone and internet service charges, continue to reduce available operating funds, limiting the program's ability to advance.

The current cap has already forced difficult decisions, including temporarily freezing the hiring of an authorized position to cover essential operational expenses and ensure there is no delay or interruption in victim services. These measures are not ideal, especially for an already small unit (5) with limited staffing of three (3) but was unfortunately necessary. 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. 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.

Increasing victim registrations and escalating operational expenses, without the flexibility to address them expeditiously, directly threaten service reliability and victims' trust. HB 2289 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.

KELDEN B.A. WALTJEN
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OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2289

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

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference
State Capitol Conference Room 325
415 South Beretania Street

Honorable Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs: The County of Hawai'i, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney submits the following testimony **in strong support** of House Bill 2289.

H.B. 2289 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 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. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



JOHN PELLETIER
CHIEF OF POLICE

POLICE DEPARTMENT

COUNTY OF MAUI

55 MAHALANI STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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WADE M. MAEDA
DEPUTY CHIEF OF POLICE

February 11, 2026

Chair David A. Tarnas
Vice Chair Mahina PoePoe
and Members
Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
The Thirty-Third Legislature
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

SUBJECT: Testimony in support of H.B. 2289, Relating to the expenditure ceiling on the Automated Victim Information and Notification system (AVINS)

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair PoePoe, and Committee Members:

I am respectfully submitting testimony in strong support of HB2289. The Automated Victim Information and Notification System (AVINS) is a critical public safety tool. It ensures that victims receive timely notifications regarding an offender's custody status, release, escape, transfer, or court proceedings. These alerts for victims are not just informational, but essential to their safety planning, peace of mind, and sense of security.

From a law enforcement standpoint, reliable victim notification strengthens public trust and supports officer safety. When victims are informed, they are better prepared, less vulnerable to unexpected contact, and more confident in the justice system's response.

Delays or system limitations caused by funding caps can have serious consequences for victims who rely on AVINS for their safety and peace of mind. The current \$600,000 annual expenditure cap restricts the program's ability to maintain staffing, technology, and service. HB2289 does not expand government unnecessarily; it simply allows the special fund to be used as intended to meet actual operational needs. Ensuring stable and adequate funding for victim notification is a direct investment in safety, accountability, and victim rights.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to pass HB2289

Sincerely,



JOHN PELLETIER
Chief of Police



February 11, 2026

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

To: Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

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

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

Hearing: Thursday, February 12, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325, 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** because it **directly affects the resources available to support victims, many of whom are women impacted by crime and gender-based violence**. Ensuring timely, reliable information and notification is **essential for empowering survivors, enabling their successful safety planning, and assisting in their recovery**.

Removing the annual expenditure ceiling on the Automated Victim Information and Notification (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 could hinder 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**.

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**. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-2289

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 2:55:07 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

HB2289 - Relating to the Expenditure Ceiling on the Automated Victim Information and Notification System Special Fund

OPPOSE

Aloha,

Oppose HB2289, removing the \$600K cap on the victim notification fund. Unlimited spending could pull from limited resources needed for Native programs. No Native-specific benefits or safeguards justify it amid funding shortfalls. Do not pass without reevaluation.

Mahalo,
Pikachu Shelby Billionaire

HB-2289

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 5:25:44 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Toby Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good afternoon, Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. My testimony is in **strong support** of House Bill 2289. This bill removes the \$600,000 annual expenditure ceiling on the SAVIN (Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification System) Special Fund to address ongoing program cost increases and growing victim service demands.

The SAVIN Special Fund is used exclusively to provide free, anonymous, and confidential access to timely information and notification 24/7 365 days a year on the custody and parole status of offenders under the authority of the State of Hawaii’s Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR). It is an invaluable resource for victims, witnesses, and survivors.

With the current annual expenditure cap, it is more and more difficult to operate the SAVIN system and adequately cover essential operational expenditures. Rising program expenses, maintaining appropriate staffing levels, and preserving critical infrastructure (such as system maintenance and office space) make it increasingly difficult to fulfill the statutory mandates of the SAVIN Special Fund.

It is essential to ensure uninterrupted access to status information and the timely notification of any changes in a perpetrator’s custody. Notification includes both a change in status as well as victims’ rights and the knowledge of when they have opportunities to provide input and comments for parole hearings and minimum setting hearings. The SAVIN system is the responsibility of DCR’s Victim Notification Services Office (VNSO). This includes monitoring the system, resolving technical issues, and supporting victims, witnesses, and survivors who call in with questions or issues about utilization of and notifications received from the SAVIN system.

Additionally, without this increase the SAVIN program will not be able to serve the growing needs of crime victims and agencies that rely on timely notifications.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to present this testimony in **strong support** of House Bill 2289.

