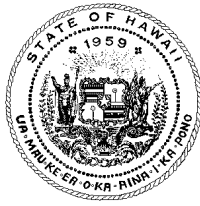


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



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
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
Deputy Director
Administration

Vacant
Deputy Director
Correctional Institutions

Sanna Muñoz
Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services
and
Programs

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 89 / SENATE
RESOLUTION 84, SENATE DRAFT 1
REQUESTING THE HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
TO ESTABLISH AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE MODELS FOR REHABILITATION
AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ON O'AHU.

by
Tommy Johnson, Director
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

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

Wednesday, April 22, 2026; 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 430& via Videoconference

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

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) **supports the intent** of Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 89 / Senate Resolution (SR) 84, Senate Draft (SD) 1, which requests the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) establish an advisory committee to develop recommendations on the implementation of alternative models for rehabilitation and restorative justice on O'ahu, provides a list of organizations that should be part of the advisory committee, and requests that the advisory committee develop recommendations that incorporate the findings of the Breaking Cycles Study in the design and planning of the new O'ahu Community Correctional Center. SCR 89 / SR 84, SD 1 also provides a list of agencies the advisory committee is requested to consult with, and requests that the advisory committee submit a report of its findings, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2027.

SCR 89 / SR 84, SD 1 Requesting the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission to Establish an Advisory Committee to Develop Recommendations on the Implementation of Alternative Models for Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice on O'ahu.

April 22, 2026

Page 2

DCR provides comments on this matter and information that the Legislature may not be aware of. Attached, please find the two-page design principles taken from the Breaking Cycles Study that are included in the planning and design of the new OCCC. This was previously provided by the HCSOC. DCR is committed to building a new OCCC that is based on rehabilitation and restorative justice, including cultural sensitivity and evidenced-based programming. We welcome the opportunity to provide a presentation to the Legislature and any other interested party regarding the work thus far on the planning and design of the new OCCC.

It should be noted that in 2017, the estimated cost to build a new OCCC was approximately \$537 million, but at that time, funding was not provided. At present, the estimated cost to build a new OCCC has risen to over \$900 million. Further delays with this project will cost the state and taxpayers \$4-\$6 million each month in construction escalation costs. This information is provided so that the Legislature is aware of this very serious issue of concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **supporting the intent** of SCR 89 / SR 84, SD 1.

Attachment.

Design Principles

Ensure safety, both physical and emotional.

Adopt a **trauma-informed, health-centered** approach.

Nurture relationships to self, family, community, land and the spiritual world.

Connect to 'aina, provide spaces to interact with the land.

Take a **strengthes-based approach** that focuses on assets.

Create opportunities for **improvement and empowerment**.

Honor diverse **cultures and identities**.

Support learning through educational programs and spaces.

Demonstrate respect for each individual, through comfortable and dignified environments.

Design Considerations

Program adjacency:

- Program-centered: a facility where program spaces, such as education or health spaces are at the center.
- Separate pre-trial sentenced populations: ensure that people are separated according to their need and risk. Misdemeanants should not be next to murderers. Separate gang members.
- Design for decommissioning: organize programs to allow for maximum flexibility, to be partially built, or to be partially decommissioned and adaptively reused.

Site design:

- Orient to central green space to provide views and access to nature.
- Progression/graduated housing to incentivize behavior.
- Enclosed courtyards for secured open space within each module.
- Access to smaller landscape areas that offer refuge or retreat.

Staff spaces:

- Establish a dedicated staff lounge to promote relaxation.
- Designate a dining room for staff meals and social interactions.
- Create a wellness courtyard for relaxation and privacy.
- Develop a walking path to encourage physical activity.
- Set up training rooms/classrooms for staff development and skill-building sessions.
- Equip a staff gym to support fitness and overall well-being.

Housing module:

- Provide treatment rooms to support rehabilitative services for mental health, substance abuse, etc.
- Incorporate glazing for natural sunlight to enter the space.
- Develop accessible green spaces to foster a connection with nature.
- Provide an outdoor recreation yard to promote physical activity.
- Integrate wall murals to create a visually uplifting and calming environment.
- Establish multi-purpose rooms for educational programs.
- Implement dynamic security with ACO stations to balance safety and positive interaction.
- Introduce varied furniture configurations to support different needs and activities.
- Design with views to the outside to reduce feelings of confinement.

Sleeping unit:

- Include windows with views of nature or the surrounding environment.
- Incorporate functional furniture to meet daily needs effectively.
- Provide personal storage to secure belongings.

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 David A. Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

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

SUBJECT: Senate Concurrent Resolution 89, Senate Draft 1, Requesting the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission to Establish an Advisory Committee to Develop Recommendations on the Implementation of Alternative Models for Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice on O'ahu.

Hearing: Wednesday, April 22, 2026; 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 430

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

The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) submits testimony in **support** of Senate Concurrent Resolution 89, Senate Draft 1, requesting the HCSOC establish an advisory committee to develop recommendations on the implementation of alternative models for rehabilitation on O'ahu.

This resolution is directly aligned with the Commission's statutory mandate and ongoing work to advance a correctional system rooted in rehabilitation, therapeutic practices, and cultural grounding. As recognized in the resolution, the *Breaking Cycles: Alternative Models for Rehabilitative and Restorative Justice on O'ahu* study provides a comprehensive, community-informed framework for transforming Hawai'i's correctional system into one that is holistic, health-centered, and trauma-informed.

The Commission has consistently emphasized that correctional reform in Hawai'i must move beyond infrastructure and toward system-wide transformation. In its January 3, 2025, letter to the Governor regarding the importance of *Breaking Cycles*, the Commission underscored that proceeding with new jail construction without a comprehensive, rehabilitative framework risks perpetuating the very cycles of incarceration the State seeks to address. The Commission urged that planning efforts be grounded in a clear, system-wide strategy centered on rehabilitation, diversion, and reentry.

S.C.R. No. 89, S.D. 1, represents a necessary and timely step toward ensuring that the State's investments in correctional infrastructure and policy are guided by a cohesive, evidence-based, and culturally grounded vision. By establishing an advisory committee, the Legislature is enabling the collaborative, cross-sector approach required to move from concept to implementation. The Commission appreciates the Legislature's confidence in having the Commission lead this effort. For these reasons, the Commission fully supports this resolution.

Should you have additional questions, the Oversight Coordinator, Christin Johnson, can be reached at 808-849-3580 or at christin.m.johnson@hawaii.gov. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



APRIL 22, 2026

SCR 89 SD1

CURRENT REFERRAL: JHA

808-679-7454
kris@imuaalliance.org
www.imuaalliance.org
@imuaalliance

Kris Coffield,
President

David Negaard,
Director

Mireille Ellsworth,
Director

Justin Salisbury,
Director

Eileen Roco,
Director

Beatrice DeRego,
Director

Corey Rosenlee,
Director

Amy Zhao,
*Policy and Partnerships
Strategist*

POSITION: SUPPORT

Imua Alliance supports SCR 89 SD1, requesting the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission to establish an advisory committee to develop recommendations on the implementation of alternative models for rehabilitation and restorative justice on O'ahu.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending gender violence and sexual exploitation, and connecting human rights with climate justice. We particularly support this measure because any discussion of incarceration in Hawai'i must confront a central reality: incarceration in Hawai'i disproportionately impacts Native Hawaiians.

Native Hawaiians make up roughly 21–22% of Hawai'i's population, but approximately 37–40% of the incarcerated population, a disparity that has persisted for decades. This means Native Hawaiians are incarcerated at nearly twice their share of the population, making them one of the most disproportionately incarcerated indigenous populations in the United States.

This disparity exists at every stage of the criminal legal system, from arrest to sentencing to incarceration and parole revocation. Research has shown that Native Hawaiians are more likely to be sentenced to prison, receive longer sentences, and face longer probation terms than other groups, even when controlling for other factors. Native Hawaiians are also disproportionately represented among individuals incarcerated in out-of-state facilities, which separates them from family, culture, and community support systems that are critical for rehabilitation and successful reentry.

The overrepresentation of Native Hawaiians in the criminal legal system is deeply connected to historical and structural factors including colonization, loss of land, poverty, housing instability, educational disparities, and unequal access to healthcare and mental health services. Studies on Hawai'i's criminal justice system consistently emphasize that Hawaiians are overrepresented due to systemic inequities, rather than higher individual rates of criminal behavior.

Incarceration also has intergenerational impacts. When parents are incarcerated, families experience economic instability, children experience trauma and educational disruption, and communities lose cultural and social leadership. These impacts compound existing inequities and contribute to cycles of incarceration and poverty.

If Hawai‘i is serious about improving public safety, reducing recidivism, and strengthening communities, we must address the root causes of incarceration and invest in alternatives such as rehabilitation, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, housing support, education, and culturally grounded reentry programs.

This resolution is important because it recognizes that incarceration policy must be examined holistically, including its social, economic, cultural, and racial impacts. Addressing these disparities is not only a criminal justice issue. It is a fundamentally an issue of equity and justice in Hawai‘i.

With aloha,

Kris Caffield

President, Imua Alliance

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: [\(808\) 927-1214](tel:(808)927-1214) / kat.caphi@gmail.com

Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor



COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Representative David Tarnas, Chair

Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

3:00 PM

Room 430 and VIDEOCONFERENCE

SUPPORT for SCR 89 SD1 w 1 slight amendment - REQUESTING DCR TO PROVIDE UPDATE ON THEIR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BREAKING CYCLES REPORT

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe 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 3,602 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars¹ and under the “care and custody” of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on April 13, 2026.

We are always mindful that more than 44% of Hawai`i's imprisoned male population (816 individuals) 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. This is definitely not rehabilitation!

Community Alliance on Prisons supports SCR 89 SD1's inclusion of a formerly incarcerated male and a formally incarcerated female as well as two ACO's who participated in the staff survey. It would be great if the two ACO's work at OCC

¹ DCR Weekly Population Report, April 13, 2026

[Pop-Reports-Weekly-2026-04-13.pdf](#)

because they know the population there and what is sorely needed to help develop recommendations and implementation of alternative models for rehabilitation and restorative justice.

Mahalo for the chance to support the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission to establish an Advisory Committee before we spend millions more of taxpayer funds in these challenging fiscal times trying to build our way out of the many problems at DCR.

We thank the committee for hearing SCR 89 SD1 and respectfully ask that JHA pass this important resolution.

LATE



TO: Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
RE: SCR 89, SD 1
HEARING: Wednesday, April 22, 2026
TIME: 3:00 p.m.
ROOM: 430
POSITION: **Strongly support**

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

My name is Bob Merce, and I am the chair of the Correctional Reform Working Group (CRWG). In 2022 the CRWG published “Getting it Right: Recommendations and Action Plan for a Better Jail”¹ which was endorsed by the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) and others, including the Native Hawaiian Legal Corp. and UPW Local 646 which represents Hawai‘i’s correctional officers. We shared our ideas with the University of Hawaii Community Design Center (UHCDC) and supported their ground breaking work in the development of “Breaking Cycles: Alternative Models for Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice on O‘ahu” (Breaking Cycles).

The CRWG strongly supports SCR 89, SD 1 which would create an Advisory Committee of community stakeholders to develop recommendations for the implementation of alternative models for rehabilitation and restorative justice on O‘ahu, based on the Breaking Cycles study prepared for the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) by the University of Hawaii Community Design Center (UHCDC).

The Breaking Cycles study was prompted by the planning of a new jail to replace the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC), and aligns with Act 179 (Haw. Sess. Laws 2019) which created the HCSOC to, among other things facilitate the correctional system’s transition to a “therapeutic and rehabilitative model,” and Act 278 (Haw, Sess. Laws 2022) which changed the name of the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR).

¹ “Getting it Right: Recommendations and Action Plan for a Better Jail” (2022).
<https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Getting-It-Right-Recommendations-and-Action-Plan-for-a-Better-Jail-with-Appendix.pdf>

The jail the State has been planning since 2015 **does not align with the rehabilitative and restorative model that the law requires, and the community wants.** The HRC 85 Task Force on Prison Reform recognized this misalignment in its 2019 Report to the Legislature, and similar concerns were raised by the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission in its 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports.

SCR89 would go a long way toward bringing the plans for the new jail into alignment with the legal mandate for a rehabilitative correctional system, and the clearly expressed desire of the community for system reform that features less incarceration and more community-based care.

Here are some of the reasons why the CRWG strongly supports SCR 89:

1. The UHCDC findings are based on an unprecedented outreach effort that included more than 120 “talk story” sessions with community leaders and stakeholder organizations, multiple interviews, 18 site visits/listening workshops, 8 co-design workshops, 5 community practice meetings, and 3 knowledge sharing symposiums, one of which took place over a two-day period and was attended by members of more than 80 organizations. The Breaking Cycles study is the only document that can fairly be said to represent the views, vision, values, and aspirations of the community with respect to the new jail.

2. Including community stakeholders in the jail planning process is a best practice. It is absolutely essential to creating a successful facility, and “the hallmark of good jail planning. Despite being reminded of this many times, and by many people, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation never included community stakeholders in the jail planning process or engaged community stakeholders in a meaningful way. SCR 89 will, at long last, give the community a voice in planning the new jail.

3. The Breaking Cycles study found that the community wants the planning for the new jail to include system reform that would increase diversion and community-based care, and reduce incarceration. Incorporating those findings into the jail planning and design process would reduce the cost of the new jail, reduce recidivism, and make our communities safer.

4. The Breaking Cycles study found that the community wants the new jail to have a public health perspective, community-partnered reentry, a health-centered and trauma-informed approach to corrections, and a Native Hawaiian well-being cultural framework. None of these ideas are part of the jail now being planned. Incorporating them into the planning and design will produce better outcomes and safer communities.

5. The State has a long-standing legal mandate to transition to a rehabilitative correctional modelⁱ which, by and large, it has not done. Incorporating the findings of the Breaking Cycles study would put the State on the rehabilitative pathway required by law.

6. On January 20, 2023, Governor Josh Green said that he did not think a billion-dollar jail was “the right move in a state and era where we need to build housing,” and that he had tasked his public safety directors and health professionals to give him a

“better proposal for the new jail.”² His public safety directors and health professional did not give him a “better proposal for the new jail.” The Breaking Cycles study is the better proposal Governor asked for, and it should be incorporated into the planning and design of the new jail.

7. A large number of community stakeholders participated in the two-year Breaking Cycles study. We shared our time, experiences and knowledge with UHCDC with the expectation that DCR would pay attention to the study, and take its findings seriously. But it has not worked out that way. At a Community of Practice meeting in 2024, someone asked a key member of the State’s jail planning team what DCR was going to do with the Breaking Cycles study. He replied that they would “winnow through it” and see what they could afford. That was essentially all he said about a study that had taken two years to complete, and involved virtually all of the stakeholders on Oahu. If an Advisory Committee is established to incorporate the study’s ideas and concepts into the planning process, it will make the time spent working with UHCDC worthwhile; otherwise, our time will have been wasted, **and a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a rehabilitative jail that will save money and lives will have been lost.**

8. DCR has never disclosed planning or design details for the new jail since its February 1, 2017 Progress Report to the State Legislature. Passage of SCR 89 would provide an opportunity to replace or supplement DCR’s design parameters, if any, with the rehabilitative design parameters in the Breaking Cycles study which includes key design concepts and a design framework, design principles, design considerations, design elements, and a proof-of-concept study for various design features.

9. The Breaking Cycles study is a outstanding work in correctional planning and design. It is well-researched, builds on the best ideas from previous reports and studies, takes into account the best design ideas from the U.S. and around the world, reflects the values and vision of the community, incorporates a Native Hawaiian well-being framework, and most importantly, show us what is possible if we are committed to designing and building a jail that will address the physical, mental, social, and economic problems faced by those caught up in our criminal legal system. Ignoring it would be a tragic waste of time, talent and money, a great disservice to the many members of the community who participated in the study, and to the multi-disciplinary team of U.H. faculty and students who worked so hard to produce the study. The Legislature should pass SCR 89 to ensure that it is not dismissed, marginalized, or ignored.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on this important resolution.

² Kevin Dayton, Gov. Josh Green Wants ‘A Better Proposal for New Oahu Jail, Honolulu Civil Beat, January 20, 2023. <https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/01/gov-josh-green-wants-a-better-proposal-for-new-oahu-jail/>



LATE

Committee: Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at 3:00pm
Place: Conference Room 430 & Via Videoconference
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of SCR89 SD1**

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

The ACLU of Hawai'i **supports SCR89 SD1** requesting the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) establish an advisory committee to develop recommendations on the implementation of alternative models for rehabilitation and restorative justice on O'ahu.

This measure closely aligns with HCSOC's mandate to transform our correctional system into one that is firmly rooted in and prioritizes rehabilitation and cultural grounding.

It is important as DCR proceeds with planning for and construction of a new facility to replace the O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) that DCR ensure the plan has recommendations from the Breaking Cycles study as a foundation, rather than something to be integrated.

We also share concerns noted by the Office of the Public Defender regarding the risk of repeating current shortcomings as DCR proceeds with the new O'ahu jail. SCR89 SD1 will help ensure the department moves forward with a focus on rehabilitation and reentry requirements rooted in reducing recidivism and decarceration.

Despite cost concerns from DCR, we believe it is more important that we do it right, rather than do it quickly. Additionally, the nearly \$1 billion price tag could be reduced substantially if the size of the proposed facility is scaled down and a priority is give to proven decarceration measures that are statistically shown not to decrease community safety.

For all these reasons, the ACLU of Hawai'i supports SCR89 SD1 and we encourage the committee to advance the measure.

Sincerely,

Josh Frost

Josh Frost

Policy Advocate

ACLU of Hawai'i

jfrost@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.

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i
P.O. Box 3410
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96801
T: 808.522.5900
F: 808.522.5909
E: office@aclu