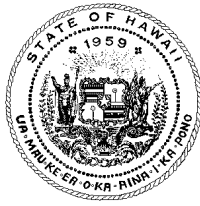


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalū Kalaima
a Ho'oponopono Ola*
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DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
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Administration

Vacant
Deputy Director
Correctional Institutions

Sanna Muñoz
Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services
and
Programs

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 89 / SENATE
RESOLUTION 84
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

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair
Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair

AND

Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richard, III, Chair
Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair

Monday, March 30, 2026; 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 016 & via Videoconference

Chairs Fukunaga, Richard, Vice Chairs Lee, Lamosao, and Members of both
Committees:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) **supports the intent** of Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 89 / Senate Resolution (SR) 84, which requests the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) establish and 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

SCR 89 / SR 84 - 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.

March 30, 2026

Page 2

and planning of the new Oahu Community Correctional Center. SCR 89 / SR 84 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.

DCR provides comments on this matter and information 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 to 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 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.

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 NŌ
235 S. Beretania Street, 16th Floor
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
(808) 587-4160

TO: The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Chair
The Honorable Chris Lee, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Chair
The Honorable Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

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

SUBJECT: Senate Concurrent Resolution 89/Senate Resolution 84, 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: Monday, March 30, 2026; 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 016

Chairs Fukunaga and Richards, III, Vice Chairs Lee and Lamosao, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) submits testimony in **support** of Senate Concurrent Resolution 89/Senate Resolution 84, 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 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.

JON N. IKENAGA
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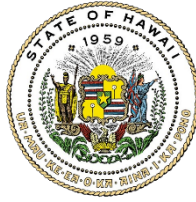
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STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

March 29, 2026

**SCR 89 / SR 84: 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.**

**Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Lee, Members of the Committee on Public Safety
and Military Affairs, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of
the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:**

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD) **supports** SCR 89, which requests the Hawai‘i Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) to establish an advisory committee to develop recommendations on the implementation of alternative models for rehabilitation and restorative justice on O‘ahu.

This measure is especially critical at this moment in time. Hawai‘i is in the process of planning and constructing a new facility to replace the O‘ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC). This presents a rare and consequential opportunity: to fundamentally rethink what a correctional facility should be - or to repeat the mistakes of the past.

From the OPD’s perspective, **it is imperative that the State does not simply build a newer version of the current jail.** The existing system has long struggled to meet its rehabilitative goals and has too often functioned as a warehouse for individuals whose needs are rooted in mental health, substance use, poverty, and systemic inequities. Replacing OCCC with a modernized structure that replicates the same underlying model will not improve outcomes, reduce recidivism, or enhance public safety.

SCR 89 appropriately recognizes that the *Breaking Cycles* study provides a roadmap for a different approach. It is grounded in rehabilitation, restoration, cultural connection, and trauma-informed design. These principles are not aspirational but are necessary if Hawai‘i is to build a facility that meaningfully addresses the root causes of justice system involvement.

The proposed advisory committee led by the HCSOC, is therefore a critical safeguard. It ensures that the design and planning of the new facility are guided by community voices, cultural practitioners, and individuals with lived experience rather than driven solely by traditional correctional models.

However, the OPD must emphasize an important concern. The HCSOC has already identified significant gaps in the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s compliance with existing rehabilitation and reentry requirements. As the State moves forward with planning a new facility, there is a real risk that these same shortcomings will be carried forward into the new system. In other words, without intentional intervention, Hawai‘i risks investing substantial public resources into building a **new facility that perpetuates the same failures as the current one.**

For this reason, the OPD strongly supports this resolution, but urges the Legislature to view it not as a planning exercise alone, but as a necessary step toward accountability and transformation. The advisory committee’s work should directly inform and be integrated into the design, programming, and operational framework of the new facility.

Hawai‘i has a unique opportunity to create a model that prioritizes healing, dignity, and successful reintegration. But that opportunity will only be realized if the State is willing to move beyond simply updating infrastructure and instead commit to reimagining the system itself.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

LATE



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE RESOLUTION 84

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 89

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

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ka Palekana Lehulehu, a me ke Kuleana Pū‘ali Koa
(Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs)
Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ke Kuleana Hawai‘i
(Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs)
Ke Kapitala ‘o Hawai‘i
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

Malaki 30, 2026

3:00 PM

Lumi 016

Aloha e Chair Fukunaga, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Lee, Vice Chair Lamosao, Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs, and Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SR84 and SCR89** which request 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. These measures appropriately build on the *Breaking Cycles* report¹ and seek to ensure planning for the new O‘ahu Community Correctional Center is informed by rehabilitation, restoration, health, culture, and community accountability rather than a purely carceral model.

These resolutions reflect principles long advanced by Native Hawaiian communities, justice reform advocates, and impacted families. Meaningful public safety is strengthened not by confinement alone, but by healing, connection, accountability, and successful reintegration. The *Breaking Cycles* report drew from a broad body of prior Hawai‘i reform work, including the Native Hawaiian Justice Task Force,² and was informed by extensive engagement with people with lived experience, family members of incarcerated individuals, and community stakeholders. Its design framework emphasizes a holistic, health-centered, trauma-informed approach rooted in relationships to self, ‘ohana, community, and ‘āina.

¹ Breaking Cycles Symposium, *Breaking Cycles Symposium*, <https://www.breaking-cycles-symposium.org/>

² Office of Hawaiian Affairs, *Native Hawaiian Justice Task Force Report* (2012), https://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/2012NHJTF_REPORT_FINAL_0.pdf

These measures are also significant from a Native Hawaiian well-being perspective. Native Hawaiian organizations have long demonstrated the value of ‘āina-based and culturally grounded approaches to rehabilitation and healing. The resolutions expressly recognize both the cultural richness of the Hālawā ahupua‘a and the strong community support for a rehabilitative model rooted in Native Hawaiian culture. If the State continues forward with a new facility on O‘ahu, planning should be guided by Native Hawaiian ‘ike, trauma-informed design, and a genuine commitment to alternatives that reduce recidivism and strengthen restoration rather than reproduce the harms of conventional jail design.

Hawai‘i’s own recent experience also points in this direction. The Mohala Wahine Women’s Court pilot on O‘ahu has already produced promising early results.³ By August 2024, twenty-three women had entered the program and seventy percent had secured independent living or residential treatment housing, and the Judiciary later reported two graduating classes whose participants completed treatment, achieved stable housing, and maintained employment, educational participation, and sobriety. Because of that early success, the Legislature made the program permanent on O‘ahu and expanded the model to Hawai‘i Island, even as longer-term outcome data continue to develop.⁴

OHA also supports the advisory committee structure. Including OHA, Papa Ola Lōkahi, ALU LIKE, the O‘ahu Council of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, the Lili‘uokalani Trust, Native Hawaiian health expertise, community representation, and consultation with Native Hawaiian practitioners in ho‘oponopono, lā‘au lapa‘au, lo‘i kalo and loko i‘a stewardship, ‘āina-based healing, ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, and Indigenous planning and design will help ensure the recommendations are grounded in both lived experience and cultural knowledge.

Finally, the Hawai‘i Correctional System Oversight Commission’s March 2025 reentry report identified ongoing gaps in compliance with rehabilitation and reentry requirements, underscoring that Hawai‘i’s correctional challenges remain systemic rather than merely architectural.⁵ These resolutions are timely because they do not assume a new facility alone will solve those failures, but instead ask the more important question OHA has raised through its longstanding criminal justice advocacy: what rehabilitative and restorative model will actually reduce harm to pa‘ahao, strengthen reentry, and better serve Native Hawaiians, their ‘ohana, and Hawai‘i as a whole.⁶

Please note this testimony represents a recommendation by OHA leadership that is subject to full Board approval. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony on these measures.

³ Hawai‘i State Judiciary, *A Report on the Women's Court Pilot Program* (November 2024), <https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/RPT-Womens-Court-Pilot-Program-FINAL.pdf>

⁴ Act 228, Session Laws 2025, https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/slh/Years/SLH2025/SLH2025_Act228.pdf

⁵ Hawai‘i Correctional System Oversight Commission, *Hoe Amau Reentry Services Report* (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025.3.7-Hoe-Amau-Reentry-Report-Final.pdf>

⁶ Office of Hawaiian Affairs, *Criminal Justice*, <https://www.oha.org/governance/criminal-justice/>

SCR-89

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 12:40:01 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

In **Strong Support** of SCR 89/SR 84, 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.

DATE: Monday, March 30, 2026
TIME: 3:00 PM
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference
PLACE: State Capitol

Aloha Chair Fukunaga and Vice Chair Lee of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs and Chair Richards and Vice Chair Lamosao of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs, and your esteemed Members,

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 Waiāu 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 SCR 89/SR 84, 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.

This measure is needed to ensure that the happiness measurement that ranks our state as #1 in the nation and the spirit of Aloha which we strive to share with our visitors and each other touches every one of our residents. As well, to protect the public resources the State has invested to advance a truly transformative outcome and to multiply their benefits many times over.

For the past decade and more, the State has invested significant time, energy and funds to address O'ahu's ailing jail and the specific needs of its population. As SCR 89 articulates, in 2022, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) contracted with the University of Hawai'i Community Design Center (UHCDC) to develop a proof of concept study, titled, Breaking Cycles: Alternative Models for Rehabilitative and Restorative Justice on O'ahu (Breaking Cycles Study).

Over a two-year period, from 2022 - 2024, APHCC attended numerous in-person and virtual community talk story session and events that helped the UHCDC create a 268-page in-depth report that includes key concepts on system reform, facility planning and design elements for the new jail. We are grateful and honored to have shared our mana'o and healing practices with the team, and we know that the work is rich with the mana of hundreds of community hearts and minds who seek to create a legacy of peace, compassion, forgiveness and aloha for all.

The Breaking Cycles Study "outlines aspirations and visions that are crucial for inspiring and enabling transformation," while presenting its seminal work as a contribution to change, "with gratitude, hope, and a firm belief that such transformation is not only possible but essential to our collective well-being."

We commend the Committees for advancing this important measure and respectfully urge your support.

'A'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia. No task is too big when done together. Let us be visionary, compassionate and purposeful in addressing one of the most challenging problems affecting our people and our State.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kehaulani Lum, Pelekikena

Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor



COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair

Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Senator Tim Richards, Chair

Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair

Monday, March 30, 2026

3:00 PM

Room 016 and VIDEOCONFERENCE

Support for SCR 89 and a suggestion - Requesting the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission to Establish an Advisory Committee to Develop Recommendations for Implementation of Alternative Models for Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice on O`ahu

Aloha Chairs Fukunaga and Richards, Vice Chairs Lee and Lamosao and Members of the Committees!

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 bars¹ 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.

The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission² (HCSOC) is the one agency that has consistently sought community input on correctional issues. Their monthly meetings are open to all.

¹ DCR Weekly Population Report, March 23, 2026

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

² Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission

hcsoc.hawaii.gov

HCSOC is the right entity to establish an Advisory Group to oversee and make recommendations on this Proof of Concept study.³ We, therefore, respectfully submit a suggestion for additional members – a male and a female who have lived experience to bring a sense of what incarceration needs to do to help people realize their full potential as well as 2 Adult Correctional Officers who participated in the Oversight Commission’s Staff Survey⁴.

These 4 members would bring reality to the development of recommendations since they have real incarceration experience gained through being incarcerated themselves and working at OCCC. DCR needs to be accountable to the community whose loved ones are in their care and custody and those who have family who work in O`ahu’s jail.

It is impossible to redirect people if the uniform staff, who have daily contact with incarcerated persons, feel undervalued and find that their suggestions are ignored.

A top-down, military-style system makes it easy to see how people exit incarceration broken when they are released and enter our neighborhoods.

CAP has been doing justice advocacy work for 30 years and we know lots of people incarcerated and many staff who work for DCR.

We want the staff to be role models for our people inside and we want the experience of people who work for DCR and those who were formerly incarcerated to share their recommendations for better ways to create a trauma-informed and restorative or transformative model with the Advisory Group.

Community Alliance on Prisons is grateful to share our experience and the reports that have been publicly available that can be a great help to inform the Advisory Group in recommending a humane, just, and restorative/transformative system.

Every person inside comes from a family and a neighborhood. We can do so much to help them return home eager to be part of the larger community and lend their hands to creating safe, healthy, and just communities.

Mahalo to HCSOC for your work to transform our broken correctional system. It takes a village to make the changes that make a real difference in people’s lives.

We are Hawai`i – we care for and about each other. WE CAN DO THIS!

³ **BREAKING CYCLES: Alternative Models for Rehabilitation
And Restorative Justice on O`ahu**, February 2025.
[Breaking Cycles](#)

⁴ **Correctional Staff Survey, Findings & Recommendations**
[Correctional-Staff-Survey-Findings-and-Recomendations-FINAL-1.pdf](#)



MARCH 30, 2026

SCR 89/SR 84

CURRENT REFERRAL: PSM/HWN

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Kris Coffield,
President

David Negaard,
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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/SR84, 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 Coffield

President, Imua Alliance

SCR-89

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 7:08:31 AM

Testimony for PSM on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald Fujiyoshi	Testifying for OHANA HOOPAKELE	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear members of both the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs, and the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Ronald Fujiyoshi and I am the treasurer of Ohana Ho`opakele, formed in 1999 by kupuna concerned about the disproportionate number of Kanaka Maoli incarcerated in the prison system. This disproportionate number of Kanaka Maoli has not changed as far as we are concerned.

Although we are in support of this resolution, we wonder if the staff of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation take seriously that Hawaiian spiritual and cultural wisdom will lead to rehabilitation of pa`ahao. If you were on Mauna Kea with all of us, you would have experienced how living Aloha provided the strength to defeat the construction of the TMT, how kupuna gathering in the kupuna tent learned how important kupuna were relied upon in the past, and how young Kanaka youth who came to dance and chant in front of the kupuna were affected for the rest of their lives.

Ohana Ho`opakele helped to pass Act 117 that was signed into law by Governor Abercrombie in June 2012 that directed the Department of Public Safety to cooperate with Ohana Ho`opakele and other restorative justice groups to plan for a Pu`uhonua or Wellness center, preferably at Kulani Correctional Center unless a better place owned by the state is found. Ohana Ho`opakele also helped to pass a resolution in 2021 that called for the Department of Public Safety to form Faith Pods in Hawaii's cotectional centers. These faith pods would allow for pa`ahao upon entry into correctional centers to begin to learn the spiritual and cultural heritage of Hawai`i that would begin their rehabilitation upon being incarcerated, not before their release. All the models are in place, but is the understading of Kanaka spiritual and cultural wisdom there and the WILL to implement these change? You senators can make this difference. The Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission that you implemented, the fine commisioners and their fine staff have the know how and the will to make changes. Just add a few ex-pa`aho who have experienced the Makahiki and program over the years and the rehabilitation CAN move into high gear. We suggest adding someone like Euel Rah Kaleihau Kamaau to this advisory committee. Ohana Ho`opakele first worked with the pa`ahao in Diamondback Correctional Center at Watonga, OK in 2003 where the first Makahiki observance was held. This tradition has continued. Recently, Ohana Ho`opakele with more resources has participated in the Makahiki observances at both Saguaro Correctional Center in Eloy, AZ and at the Halawa Correctional facility on Oahu with cultural practitionrs and other supporters for the last two years. Now is the

time to implement Kanaka spiritual and cultural practices to truly rehabilitate pa`ahao. We need you senators to show that there is the will to make this happen.

Pass this resolution as a sign of your will to change the prison system from one of punishment to one of rehabilitation!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!



March 30, 2026

Hawaii State Legislature
Committee on Public Safety & Military Affairs

Strong Support for SCR 89

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

My name is Jamee Mahealani Miller, Co-Executive Director of 'Ekolu Mea Nui, and I am writing in strong support of SCR 89 which establishes an Advisory Committee of community stakeholders to advance alternative models of rehabilitation and restorative justice on O'ahu based on the Breaking Cycles study.

The Breaking Cycles report represents a comprehensive, community-informed effort in Hawai'i's correctional system planning. It reflects extensive engagement across communities and captures the values, 'ike, and lived experiences of those most impacted. It offers a clear vision for a system grounded in healing, accountability, and public safety. However, the true measure of this work is not the report itself it is whether its findings are meaningfully carried forward.

SCR 89 creates a pathway to ensure that this body of work is not set aside, but actively informs decisions moving forward. It helps ensure that those in positions of authority are guided by community voice, evidence, and shared responsibility in shaping what comes next. It is especially important that Native Hawaiian perspectives are centered in this process. The impacts of incarceration on our communities are profound, and culturally grounded approaches are essential to healing, restoration, and long-term public safety.

I also want to acknowledge that advisory committees have not always resulted in meaningful action. Too often, community members invest time, knowledge, and trust without seeing change. SCR 89 presents an opportunity to do this differently by ensuring that community engagement leads to implementation, not just discussion. The Breaking Cycles study provides a roadmap including diversion, community-based care, trauma-informed approaches, and culturally grounded rehabilitation. The responsibility now is to act on that roadmap. SCR 89 helps ensure that we do.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Jamee Mahealani Miller

Dr. Jamee Mahealani Miller
Co-Executive Director
'Ekolu Mea Nui
jamee@ekolumeanui.org

Robert K. Merce
2467 Aha Aina Place
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96821

TO: Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
RE: SCR 89
HEARING: March 30
TIME: 3:00
ROOM: 016
POSITION: **Strongly support**

Aloha Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Bob Merce. I am a retired lawyer and chair of the Correctional Reform Working Group which spent a year researching best practices in jail planning and design, and studying correctional facilities around the world. In 2022 we published "Getting it Right: Recommendations and Action Plan for a Better Jail"¹ which was endorsed by the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission" and others, including the United Public Workers Union, AFSCME Local 646 which represents Hawaii's correctional officers. We also 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).

I strongly support SCR 89 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 the passage of Act 179 in 2019 which created the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission with a mandate to facilitate the correctional system's transition to a "therapeutic and rehabilitative model," and Act 278 in 2022 which changed the name of the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR),

The problem is that the new jail the State is planning **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 said that the State was on the wrong path, and that if it didn't change course, the new jail would be a monumental failure because it is based on outmoded ideas, and a failed planning process.

Similar concerns were raised by the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission in its 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports, and in papers by me and the Correctional Reform Working

Group that were endorsed by the Commission. Community criticism of the jail planning process was also voiced by the public at Commission meetings.

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 I strongly support 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.² **The Breaking Cycles study is the only document that can fairly be said to represent the views, vision, values, aspirations, and desires of the community** with respect to the new jail. Key elements of the study should be incorporated into the jail planning process, and be a foundational document for planning 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.³ 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.**⁴ 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 framework⁵. 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 model⁶ which, by and large, it has not done.⁷ 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.”⁸ 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. At January 8, 2026 meeting of the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Committee, Bettina Mehnert, President and CEO of ahl., the main architecture firm working on the new jail, gave a power point presentation to the Commissioners. The slide on the goals and vision for the new jail was so vague as to be meaningless, and did not contain the word rehabilitation. <https://www.youtube.com/live/KsMltYwv4a8>, YouTube video recording at 18:22.

9. 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.

10. The Breaking Cycles study is a groundbreaking 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

ENDNOTES

¹ The Correctional Reform Working Group, “Getting It Right: Recommendations and Action Plan for a Better Jail” (2023). <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Getting-It-Right-Recommendations-and-Action-Plan-for-a-Better-Jail-with-Appendix.pdf>

² University of Hawaii Community Design Center, *Breaking Cycles: Alternative Models for Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice on Oahu*, Proof of Concept Study, prepared for the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, February, 2025, p.10. <https://www.breaking-cycles-symposium.org>.

³ See, James R. Robertson, *Jail Planning and Expansion, Local Officials and Their Roles*, Second Edition (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Corrections, 2010) <https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.nicic.gov/Library/022668.pdf>; Justice Partners, “Ten Steps to System Change, Prepared for the MacArthur Foundation Safety+Justice Challenge, August, 2015 https://www.safetyandjusticechallenge.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/10-Steps-To-System-Change_JSP-Brief.pdf ; Justice Management Institute, *From Silo To System: What Makes A Justice System Operate Like A System*, April 2015, 17, http://www.safetyandjusticechallenge.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/From-Silo-to-System-30-APR2015_FINAL.pdf; Ken Ricci and Laura Maiello, *A Systematic Approach to Sustainability* (New York: GLC/Ricci Greene Associates, 2007) https://riccigreene.com/content/pub_attachment/article_23_Thu_2012.pdf; HCR 85 Task Force on Effective Incarceration Policies and Improving Hawaii’s Correctional System, Interim Report to the Hawaii Legislature, Regular Session, 2019 <https://lrb.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/InterimReportOfTheHCR85TaskForceOnEffectiveIncarcerationPolicies.pdf>; HCR 85 Task Force on Prison Reform Creating Better Outcomes, Safer Communities, Final Report to the Hawaii Legislature 2019 Regular Session “(December, 2018) https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HCR-85_task_force_final_report.pdf; David M. Bennett and Donna Latin, *Jail Capacity Planning Guide: A Systems Approach*, National Institute of Corrections, November, 2009; Correctional Reform Working Group, *Getting It Right: Recommendations and Action Plan for a Better Jail*, <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Getting-It-Right-Recommendations-and-Action-Plan-for-a-Better-Jail-with-Appendix.pdf>

⁴ *Breaking Cycles*, note 1 supra. at 12.

⁵ Breaking Cycles, note 1 supra. at 12-17.

⁶ Act 179 (Hawaii Sess. Laws. 2019)(mandate to transition correctional system to therapeutic and rehabilitative system; Act 278 (Hawaii. Sess. Laws 2022)(changing name from Department of Public Safety to Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; §355-1 (ensuring that inmates housed elsewhere receive rehabilitative services and treatment equal to those in-state; HRS353-6 (rehabilitative programs); See generally, Getting it Right, supra. note 2, pp. 16-21.

⁷ See generally, Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission, “Hoe Amai: The Current State of Reentry in Hawaii,” March 7, 2026. <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025.3.7-Hoe-Amau-Reentry-Report-Final.pdf>

⁸ 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/>

Michael K. Livingston
25 Lumahai Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96825

TO: Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
RE: SCR 89
HEARING: March 30
TIME: 3:00
ROOM: 016
POSITION: **Strongly support**

Aloha Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Michael Livingston. I am a practicing attorney with the Davis Levin Livingston law firm. I am also a member of the nonprofit Correctional Reform Working Group.

The Correctional Reform Working Group came together in 2022 with one goal in mind: to improve Hawai'i's Correctional System. Each of our members has experience with the correctional system, and all of us are guided by a common belief that our correctional system is badly broken and in a state of crisis. Although our Working Group sees a need for "systemic reform" within the correctional system, we chose to focus first on the planning and design of a new jail to replace OCCC. We made this decision because of our concern that the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (formerly known as the Department of Public Safety) was in the process of planning and designing a new jail that will do little, if anything, to transition our correctional system to a more rehabilitative and therapeutic model.

Our Working Group did extensive research and engaged with various experts in an attempt to better understand how the design of the new jail will impact Hawaii's correctional system for decades to come. We compiled our findings and recommendations in a paper titled *Getting It Right: Recommendations and Action Plan for A Better Jail*. We subsequently shared our analysis and recommendations with the University of Hawaii Community Design Center (UHCDC), which was contracted by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to do community outreach with respect to the design and planning of the new jail. The UHCDC did an amazing job, conducting 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 the symposiums, a two-day workshop, was attended by members of more than 80 organizations. The UHCC compiled its findings and recommendations in an impressive work titled *Breaking Cycles: Alternative Models for Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice on O'ahu (Breaking Cycles)*.

I am writing to express my strong support for SCR 89. This important bill would create an Advisory Committee of community stakeholders to develop recommendations based on the *Breaking Cycles* study. Sadly, the design and planning process for the new jail appears to be moving ahead in the shadows, without transparency and without giving careful consideration to the *Breaking Cycles* study. Unless the Breaking Cycles study is given the attention and deference it deserves, we risk missing this opportunity to move our correctional system in the direction of the rehabilitative and therapeutic model the law requires and the stakeholders in our community desire.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important Resolution.

PAULA T. MORELLI, MSW, PHD

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March 27, 2026

TO: Committee of Public Safety and Military Affairs

RE: **SCR89**

HEARING: March 30, 2026

TIME: 3:00 p.m.

ROOM: 016

POSITION: **Strongly Support**

Aloha Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Lee and Members of the Committee:

My name is Paula T. Morelli, and I strongly support SCR89 which would create an Advisory Committee of community stakeholders to develop recommendations for implementing alternative models of 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 Hawai‘i Community Design Center.

Beginning October 10, 2023, communities and stakeholders throughout Hawai‘i came together with facilitation from the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, School of Architecture Community Design Center to take on the difficult task of examining best practices and living spaces for a new jail. After hundreds of hours of research, meetings and analysis the *“Breaking Cycles: Alternative Models for Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice on O‘ahu”* report was completed and submitted on February 2025 to DCR.

What has the DCR done with this report? They have provided no feedback to community stakeholders or the public. Where is the accountability? The public trust is eroded by this lack of responsiveness and secrecy. A community advisory committee to DCR is a first step toward transparency and accountability.

Respectfully

PAULA T. MORELLI