

## ACT 148

S.B. NO. 2308

A Bill for an Act Relating to Children.

*Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:*

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that a growing prison population has raised serious concerns regarding the collateral effects of incarceration on the children and families of incarcerated persons and the communities from which they came. According to the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics' most recent study on incarcerated parents in the United States, more than 1,700,000 minors, representing 2.3 per cent of the population, have at least one incarcerated parent.

The legislature further finds that the incarceration of a parent is a traumatic event for children. Studies show that a substantial number of incarcerated parents were deeply involved in their children's lives before imprisonment by providing daily care, as well as financial and emotional support. Studies also show that the incarceration of a parent is likely to result in unstable family relationships, poor academic performance, financial instability, material hardship, and social stigma.

Providing social services and programs for children who have a parent in the prison system supports the children's emotional and behavioral well-being. Furthermore, providing support to incarcerated parents and their children preserves and strengthens family connections, which yield positive societal benefits in the form of reduced recidivism, less intergenerational criminal justice system involvement, and improved healthy child development.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for programs and services for children of incarcerated parents and to assist with family reunification.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$125,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2014-2015 for funding programs and services for children of incarcerated parents and assisting with family reunification.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of public safety for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2014.

(Approved June 24, 2014.)