

ACT 233

S.B. NO. 304

A Bill for an Act Relating to the Judiciary.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that in June 2024, the American Probation and Parole Association published national standards for community supervision which indicated that the optimal caseload distribution according to risk level is: intensive, twenty to one; moderate to high risk, fifty to one; and low risk, two hundred to one. One study highlighted the benefits of following these national standards, showing that recidivism fell by thirty per cent where agencies redistributed caseloads to ensure smaller caseloads of higher-risk individuals. Other research has confirmed that moderate to high-risk persons on probation on a fifty to one caseload receive significantly more office sessions, field visits, employer contacts, telephone check-ins, and substance use disorder and mental health treatment, leading to significantly better probation outcomes, including fewer drug tests and other technical violations. Although the adult client services branch has made efforts to align with the national standards recommended by the American Probation and Parole Association, these standards are unattainable with existing staffing at the adult client services branch.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to enable the adult client services branch to move toward the recommended national best practice standards for community supervision by establishing positions and appropriating funds for the adult client services branch of the first circuit.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$739,440 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to establish permanent positions in the adult client services branch of the first circuit court, including:

- (1) \$73,836 each for eight full-time equivalent (8.0 FTE) probation officer positions;
- (2) \$50,880 for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) social worker assistant position; and
- (3) \$48,936 each for two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) clerk positions.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the judiciary for the purposes of this Act.

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SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$140,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for operating expenses for the adult client services branch of the first circuit court.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the judiciary for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Approved June 26, 2025.)