

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

76 North King Street, Honolulu, HI 96817

Phones/E-Mail: (808) 533-3454, (808) 927-1214 / [kat.caphi@gmail.com](mailto:kat.caphi@gmail.com)



## COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Sen. David Ige, Chair

Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Thursday, April 4, 2013

9:50 a.m.

Room 211

## STRONG SUPPORT FOR SCR 26- COMMUNITY PLACEMENT FOR NONVIOLENT WOMEN

Aloha Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani 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 for more than a decade. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 5,800 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars, always mindful that approximately 1,500 Hawai'i individuals are serving their sentences abroad, thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Native Hawaiians, far from their ancestral lands.

SCR 26 encourages the department of public safety to continue and expand its structured community placement programs.

As of December 31, 2012, there were 690 women under the care and custody of the Department of Public Safety, 20% who are probation or parole violators<sup>1</sup>.

A study commissioned by the Department of Public Safety in 2007<sup>2</sup> revealed that Hawai'i has been over-classifying our incarcerated population and failing to use tools that allow for community supervision, rather than imprisonment. The majority - 84% - of Hawai'i's incarcerated female population are nonviolent.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Public Safety Weekly Population Report, December 31, 2012

<sup>2</sup> Validation and Re-Design of the Hawaii Department of Public Safety Jail and Prison Classifications System Report, Patricia L. Hardyman, PhD, September 5, 2007.

## NON-VIOLENT SENTENCED FEMALE JAIL & PRISON INMATES BY CUSTODY

<u>Custody Level</u>	<u>Female/Jail Inmates</u>		<u>Female/Prison Inmates</u>	
	<b>Current</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Projected</b>
Maximum	1.5%	1.5%	3.2%	1.9%
Medium	36.1%	24.8%	30.3%	29.4%
Minimum	62.4%	20.3%	27.6%	18.7%
Community	NA	53.4%	38.9%	50.0%

A Community Placement program, such as the one in this resolution, helps facilitate a more seamless and successful reintegration process for women transitioning from prison. It is an in-between step where women receive support and supervision as they transition from more to less structure. Women typically parole to the community facing many unforeseen challenges; even more pronounced when paroling directly from the prison environment directly to the community.

Community Placement affords women the opportunity to live in the residence they plan to parole to and "test the waters" with supervision and support as part of a structured and gradual re-integration process. This critical program addresses a gap in services for women in their re-integration process and insures a greater likelihood of success as they re-enter the community. Community Placement services for women are cost effective in that they impact the social fabric of our community by decreasing recidivism and stopping the revolving door, thus preempting the intergenerational cycle of abuse, addiction, crime and incarceration.

Research has clearly shown that successful re-entry programs lead to less recidivism, less crime, fewer victims, and increased public safety. Community Placement and helping restore these women's lives makes for a safe community and stronger families.

Hawai'i had a community placement program for women that was sadly defunded. The women in that program accessed the services/programs from a nonprofit organization that specializes in a broad range of gender responsive services.

The cost of incarceration is \$127/day, the cost for a residential program is approximately \$100/day and the cost of structured community placement is \$50/day. This is a tremendous cost savings while affording the women, most of whom are the primary caregivers of their children, the opportunity to reconnect with their families, seek employment, and successfully transition to the community.

We all benefit from safer communities and structured community placement is an important step in this direction.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.