HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A MEDICAL RELEASE PROGRAM AND PROVIDE INFORMATION RELATED TO DEATHS AT HAWAII, CONTRACT, AND INTERSTATE COMPACT INMATE FACILITIES.

WHEREAS, the National Conference of State Legislatures reports that a growing number of states are releasing older, chronically ill offenders into the community; and

WHEREAS, a National Conference of State Legislatures report states that studies show that geriatric inmates, who develop an average of three chronic illnesses while imprisoned, cost the states an average $70,000 per year, which is two to three times the cost of imprisoning a younger inmate; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Safety's budget increased 75.5 per cent from fiscal year 2000 to 2009; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Safety's budget for contract prison beds, including those at the Federal Detention Center and facilities of the Corrections Corporation of America or other private prison vendors increased one hundred ninety-two per cent from fiscal year 2000 to 2009; and

WHEREAS, research documents that older inmates are unlikely to reoffend and pose little to no risk to the community; and

WHEREAS, while at least thirty-seven states have implemented early release programs for geriatric, ill inmates, none of them allow inmates who have been convicted of violent or sexual offenses to participate; and

WHEREAS, because state definitions of the age at which prisoners are categorized as "geriatric" varies from fifty in Ohio to sixty-five in New York, the exact number of older prisoners is not known; now, therefore,
BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, that the Department of Public Safety is requested to develop and implement a medical release program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Public Safety is requested to post information relating to the medical release program on the Department's website, including the following:

(1) The criteria for medical release;
(2) Eligibility requirements for medical release;
(3) Procedure for applying for a medical release; and
(4) Average processing time for eligible applications; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Public Safety is requested to submit annual reports to the Legislature no later than January 31 of each year regarding its medical release program and post the reports on the Department's website, that include information on inmate deaths as allowed by law, including:

(1) The age and gender of deceased individuals;
(2) The facilities where the individuals were held; and
(3) Any medical information allowed to be released by law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the Director of Public Safety, and the Chairperson and Administrator of the Hawaii Paroling Authority.

OFFERED BY: [Signature]

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