

**HB 2266,  
HD1, SD1  
Testimony**



the  
**Drug Policy  
Forum**  
of hawai'i

March 31, 2010

To: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair and  
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Executive Director

RE: HB 2266 HD1 SD1 Relating to Corrections  
Tuesday, March 16, 2010, 1:25 p.m., Room 229

Position: Strong Support

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawai'i writes in strong support of HB 2266 HD1 Relating to Corrections. This measure proposes to establish policies and standards to provide appropriate treatment to victims of sexual assault in prison and to prevent the occurrence of sexual assaults in prisons.

State and prison officials have a duty to protect inmates from sexual assault and to provide the necessary care should an assault occur. Sexual assault can have persistent, long-lasting psychological effects on victims. Since those effects will likely last even after release from prison, they cannot and should not be ignored by the responsible agencies. Proper treatment must be given in a timely manner.

This measure proposes the bare minimum of policies regarding sexual assault. Among other policies that should be considered: requiring one or two staff members in each facility to be trained sexual assault counselors; a trained rapid response team; and that staff and inmates are all acquainted with the department's protocols dealing with sexual assault. These policies should also be required of contracted prisons housing inmates from Hawai'i.

The Department of Public Safety must create a culture within its facilities that does not tolerate sexual assault. Staff should not be allowed to be indifferent to the sexual violence that occurs within the walls of prisons.

Please pass this bill as a starting point to preventing sexual assault in our prisons and in contracted prisons. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

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