

Testimony
By Ted Sakai
Senate Bill 2549, SD1, Relating to Employment Security
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
Tuesday, February 23, 2010, 10:10 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Tsutsui and Members of the Committee:

I support the passage of Senate Bill 2549, SD 1, Relating to Employment Security. This bill appropriates funds to the various county workforce investment boards to improve employer outreach and services, labor pool expansion, capacity building and operation of one stop career centers within each county.

My testimony is focused on the activity of the Workforce Investment Board in the County of Hawaii. After retiring from a career with the Department of Public Safety, I have been privileged to be involved with a dynamic consortium of public agencies, private agencies, and individual citizens called the Going Home Consortium. Going Home seeks to insure that needed services are available to the criminal offender who is in the community after finishing a term of incarceration. This helps the community, as the offender becomes a productive, law-abiding citizen; the correctional system, as it can relieve prison overcrowding in the long run; and the individual offenders and their families.

Among other things, the County of Hawaii WIB has supported the efforts of the Going Home Committee. Because of this support, Going Home partners have been able to help offenders in the community find employment, which is among the most critical services needed by offenders making the transition from secure incarceration to life in the free world. Without gainful employment, the offender is not likely to succeed in the community. With the support of the County of Hawaii WIB, the Going Home partners have developed some truly innovative and effective programs to help offenders prepare for, secure, and retain meaningful jobs. In fact, Going Home has become a model for collaboration that needs to be replicated throughout Hawaii. SB 2549 will enable Going Home to continue its current efforts and perhaps develop even more creative approaches to help the criminal offender.

I urge you to pass SB 2549, SD 1 and appropriate the funds that are needed now more than ever.

Thank you.

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