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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that an estimated  
2   2,700,000 children nationwide have at least one parent that is  
3   incarcerated, and studies conducted by the National Fatherhood  
4   Initiative show that in terms of negative impacts on children,  
5   incarceration may be worse than the death of a parent or the  
6   divorce of parents. Even more disheartening is the evidence  
7   that children of incarcerated parents are more likely to become  
8   incarcerated themselves as teenagers or adults, thus continuing  
9   the "cycle of incarceration" that sadly becomes generational in  
10  some families.

11           These statistics have not gone unnoticed by children and  
12  family serving organizations in Hawaii who have developed  
13  mentoring and other types of social services aimed at assisting  
14  these children. However, there continues to be major gaps in  
15  services for these children because funding for programs aimed  
16  at helping them has never been prioritized, largely due to a  
17  lack of data to justify the extent of the problem in Hawaii.



1 This is especially true for service providers who are trying to  
2 access federal funding that is programmed to assist children and  
3 families and break the cycle of incarceration.

4 In January 2014, the legislative keiki caucus established a  
5 working group to explore the issues surrounding children and  
6 families impacted by incarceration. Called the family  
7 reunification working group, the group was comprised of  
8 representatives from several organizations and service providers  
9 and parents of children who have been affected by incarceration.  
10 The group established two immediate priorities, one of which was  
11 to develop a database of children in Hawaii impacted by  
12 incarceration. During the past year, the working group explored  
13 various ways to collect the data needed to identify the number  
14 and basic demographics of these children and concluded that the  
15 fastest and easiest way to collect the essential data was to ask  
16 for this data on current forms now used by the department of  
17 public safety's corrections division to intake offenders  
18 entering the Hawaii corrections system.

19 SECTION 2. Chapter 353, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
20 amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately  
21 designated and to read as follows:



1        "§353-    Incarcerated parents; data collection.    Beginning  
2 on July 1, 2016, the department shall collect the following data  
3 upon intake of offenders into the correctional system:

4        (1)    The number of offenders who are parents;

5        (2)    The number of children under the age of eighteen, per  
6 offender who is a parent; and

7        (3)    Any other information about incarcerated parents and  
8 their children that the department deems useful to  
9 facilitate the provision of services to incarcerated  
10 parents or their children."

11        SECTION 3. The department of public safety, in  
12 collaboration with the family reunification working group  
13 established by the legislative keiki caucus and other  
14 stakeholders, shall devise the forms or questions to be asked of  
15 offenders upon intake into the correctional system to obtain the  
16 information required pursuant to section 2 of this Act. The  
17 department of public safety shall also develop a plan for the  
18 management of the data collected and public disclosure of the  
19 data in accordance with all applicable laws.

20        SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

21        SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.



**Report Title:**

Public Safety; Incarcerated Parent Data

**Description:**

Requires the Department of Public Safety to collect data on the number of incoming offenders into the state correctional system who are parents, the number of children they have that are under the age of eighteen, and any other relevant data that the Department deems useful to assist these at-risk children.

(HB998 HD1)

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