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# SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, TO WORK WITH THE FAMILY REUNIFICATION WORKING GROUP AND OTHER COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO ESTABLISH VISITATION CENTERS AT ALL STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES AND JAILS.

1           WHEREAS, as states grapple with the alarming statistics  
2 regarding children of incarcerated parents nationwide, child  
3 welfare servers and public safety stakeholders are acknowledging  
4 the adverse childhood experiences and trauma faced by children  
5 of incarcerated parents; and  
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7           WHEREAS, child welfare servers and public safety  
8 stakeholders are declaring that they will fulfill their duty to  
9 ensure the rights and wellbeing of all children, including the  
10 children of incarcerated parents; and  
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12           WHEREAS, parental incarceration is a strong risk factor for  
13 many adverse outcomes for children, including antisocial and  
14 violent behavior, mental health problems, failure to graduate  
15 from school, and unemployment; and  
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17           WHEREAS, parental incarceration is now recognized as an  
18 "adverse childhood experience" and is distinguished from other  
19 adverse childhood experiences by the unique combination of  
20 trauma, shame, and stigma; and  
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22           WHEREAS, the prison environment can be frightening and  
23 traumatizing for children, both in the attitudes and behaviors  
24 of prison staff as well as the physical setting of approved  
25 visitation sites; and  
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27           WHEREAS, visits can include long waits, body frisks, rude  
28 treatment, and exposure to crowded visiting rooms with no  
29 activities for children; and  
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1 WHEREAS, such conditions do not encourage frequent visits  
2 between incarcerated parents and their children, despite  
3 findings from studies suggesting the maintenance of family ties  
4 and parent-child relationships is linked to post-release  
5 success, lower rates of recidivism, and fewer parole violations;  
6 and  
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8 WHEREAS, studies suggest that the alarming rates of  
9 intergenerational incarceration may be attributed to the lack of  
10 communication and maintenance of child-incarcerated parent  
11 relationships; and  
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13 WHEREAS, caring for children who are experiencing the  
14 stigma and blame associated with parental incarceration is  
15 particularly difficult for caregivers and may be emotionally and  
16 physically taxing; and  
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18 WHEREAS, Hawai'i's correctional system can benefit from the  
19 establishment of visitation centers at all local correctional  
20 prisons and jails with the hope to strengthen, rebuild, and  
21 reunify children with their incarcerated parents and ensure the  
22 welfare and wellbeing of children of incarcerated parents; and  
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24 WHEREAS, in January 2014, the legislative Keiki Caucus  
25 established a working group to explore the issues surrounding  
26 children and families impacted by incarceration, called the  
27 Family Reunification Working Group, which consisted of  
28 representatives from Blueprint for Change; Hawai'i Prisoner  
29 Resource Center, dba Holomua Center; the Office of Hawaiian  
30 Affairs; ALU LIKE, Inc.; Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center;  
31 Keiki O Ka Aina Learning Centers; Family Programs Hawai'i; Adult  
32 Friends for Youth; Community Alliance on Prisons; TJ Mahoney;  
33 Chaminade University's Native Hawaiian Program; and Makana O Ke  
34 Akua Clean and Sober Living, and included parents of children  
35 affected by incarceration; now, therefore,  
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37 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirtieth Legislature  
38 of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2019, that during the  
39 interim following the Regular Session of 2019, the Department of  
40 Human Services, in consultation with the Department of Public  
41 Safety, is requested to work with the Keiki Caucus's Family  
42 Reunification Working Group and other community stakeholders to



1 develop a plan to establish children-friendly and family-  
2 friendly visitation centers at all State correctional prisons  
3 and jails to ensure the wellbeing of children of incarcerated  
4 parents and their families; and  
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6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Human  
7 Services is requested to submit a report on the status of  
8 visitation centers, including any findings, recommendations, and  
9 proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty  
10 days prior to the convening of the Regular Sessions of 2020 and  
11 2021; and  
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Human  
14 Services is requested to include in its reports to the  
15 Legislature an assessment of any child accommodations in current  
16 visitation areas in prisons and jails and recommendations to  
17 improve any specific issues; and  
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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
20 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Human Services,  
21 Director of Public Safety, and Chairperson of the Keiki Caucus's  
22 Family Reunification Working Group.  
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