

**OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH
ACTION HUI**

31 March 2022

House Committee on Finance

Hearing Time: 2:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual

Re: SB 2770, SD1 HD1, Relating to Native Hawaiian Rehabilitation Programs

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and members of the Committee,

We are writing in strong support of SB 2770, SD1 HD1, relating to Native Hawaiian Rehabilitation Programs. This measure will require the Department of Public Safety to create, in collaboration with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, a Native Hawaiian rehabilitation program for prison inmates that emphasizes Native Hawaiian values and cultural practices. Effective 07/01/3000.

This bill would focus on traditional practices in programs that contribute to the betterment of Kānaka Maoli in the prison system. Hawai'i's incarceration crisis has had a particularly severe impact on Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI). According to the ACLU, in 2018, NHPI made up only 23% of adults in the state, yet also a reported 47% of people incarcerated under Hawai'i's jurisdiction that year. Prison sentences alone are not enough to rehabilitate Native Hawaiian individuals. Connection to ancestral and cultural roots are crucial in healing and creating opportunities for better ways of life for Kānaka Maoli. We believe this measure is a very important step in the efforts to advance Native Hawaiian equity in the justice system.

The Opportunity Youth Action Hui is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth; promoting equity in the justice system; and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs.

We seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth houselessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally-informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.

Please support SB 2770, SD1 HD1.

A COLLABORATION OF THE HAWAI'I YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY, PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, OLOMANA SCHOOL, KINA 'EHA, HALE KIPA, RYSE, OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS, 1099 ALAKEA ST., STE. 2530, HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96813
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