

February 08, 2023

House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans

Hearing Time: 09:00 a.m.

Location: State Capitol

Re: HB 823, Relating to Deaths Within the Correctional System

Aloha e Chair Hashem, and members of the Committee:

We are writing in **strong support of** HB 823, Relating to Deaths Within the Correctional System.

This bill will expand the scope of inmate deaths that are reported to the Governor and Legislature; require reports to be published on the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation website; require reports on the cause of death and mandate public access to certain information within those reports; and take effect on the effective date of section 353-40, Hawaiʻi Revised Statutes.

The lives of those in correctional facilities matter just as much as those that are not. And their deaths should be investigated, treated, and reported on with the utmost respect and diligence. The public deserves complete transparency on the happenings within the correctional and justice systems of Hawaiʻi.

Our collective, Opportunity Youth Action Hawaiʻi (OYAH), works to support young people under the age of 25 who are disconnected from school and work, referred to as “opportunity youth.” This developmental time period is extremely consequential to the individual growth and overall life chances of our children. **We support this measure.**

Opportunity Youth Action Hawaiʻi 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 HB 823.**