

FEBRUARY 11, 2022

OPPORTUNITY YOUTH ACTION HUI POLICY PRIORITIES

The second cohort of college student advocates has been engaged by members of the Opportunity Youth Action Hui to advance initiatives in support of the hui member organizations, including Native Hawaiian equity in the criminal justice system, workforce training and development, trauma-informed care, and the education, mental health and well-being of youth.

Bills OYAH Supports:

SB 2770 and HB 2311 HD1 (Companions)

SB 2770 and **HB 2311 HD1** are related to Native Hawaiian Rehabilitation Programs and would appropriate funds to the Department of Public Safety to collaborate with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs for the creation of a Native Hawaiian rehabilitation program for prison inmates, which puts an emphasis on Native Hawaiian values and cultural practices.

Testimony in support were submitted on behalf of OYAH for both bills, noting that the bills would highlight traditional practices in programs that focus on 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. In 2018, this group made up only 23% of adults in the state, but a reported **47%** of people incarcerated under Hawai'i's jurisdiction that year (ACLU).

During the CMV hearing for **HB 2311** on February 4th, testifier **Alicia Kaluhiokalani** stood in strong support of the measure, sharing her personal journey through 18 years of prison, programs, rehab, and more. She said that the only thing that had ever worked - the only thing that had helped heal generational trauma and made her "feel whole" - was "practicing [her] culture." Furthermore, she added that Western medicine (only deals with the head) is not enough to heal Native Hawaiians. Traditional Hawaiian medicinal practices (deal with the heart/na'au) are necessary. **"To feel complete, you must heal the mind and mend the heart."**

Current updates:

SB 2770 – This bill was passed by the Senate HWN/PSM committees and next needs to be approved by the Ways and Means Committee. **HB 2311 HD1** – This bill was passed by the Corrections, Military & Veterans Committee and next moves to the House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs committee.

Aloha mahina 'ōlelo Hawai'i!



Other bills of interest:

- SB 3018 and HB 1990 (Homelessness; Kauhale Program)
- SB 1128 and HB 974 (Office of Youth Services)
- SB 2878 (Emancipation of minors)
- SB 3168 (Homelessness; 'Ohana Zones pilot program; housing)
- SB 3235 (Safe spaces for Youth Pilot Program)
- HB 1736 (Education; retired teachers employment during a state of emergency)
- SB 2481 (Youth Crisis Centers)

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