

03 February 2022

Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs/Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

Hearing Time: 01:00pm

Location: Virtual

Re: SB 2770, Relating to Native Hawaiian Rehabilitation Programs

Aloha e Chair Shimabukuro and Chair Nishihara, Vice-Chair Keohokalole and

Vice-Chair DeCoite, and members of the Committees:

We are writing in **strong support** of SB 2770, relating to Native Hawaiian Rehabilitation Programs. This measure will appropriate funds to the Department of Public Safety to collaborate with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs the creation of a Native Hawaiian rehabilitation program for prison inmates, which puts an emphasis on Native Hawaiian values and cultural practices.

This bill would highlight traditional practices in programs that focus on the betterment of Kānaka Maoli in the prison system. Hawaiʻi’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 Hawaiʻi’s jurisdiction that year (ACLU). We believe this measure is a pivotal step to the effort to advance Native Hawaiian equity within the justice system.

The Opportunity Youth Action Hui is a collaboration of organizations and individual 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.**