



LATE TESTIMONY

Committee: Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, February 12, 2013, 2:45 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 224
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Support of S.B. 1253,
Relating to Public Safety

Dear Chair Espero and Members of the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii ("ACLU of Hawaii") writes in support of S.B. 1253, Relating to Community Integration.

The ACLU of Hawaii strongly supports all efforts to reduce overincarceration and to develop a comprehensive reintegration system. To achieve these goals, we support legislation like S.B. 1253, which seeks to identify women who are eligible for reintegration and contract with gender-responsive community services providers to assist women in successfully transitioning back into the community

Reintegrating female offenders are faced with significant and daunting challenges, ranging from housing obstacles to societal prejudices. Oftentimes experiencing unresolved sexual or physical trauma and substance abuse, women struggle with readjusting to their communities after incarceration. Although most female offenders are non-violent in nature and pose no risk to society, they are expected to succeed within a system that doesn't provide individual, gender-responsive services. That incarceration is not an effective method for rehabilitating substance abuse addictions further hinders their recovery and heightens the likelihood of recidivism.

The detrimental consequences of retaining and exasperating the current system are significant. Females are more likely to be repeat offenders when their substance abuse addictions are not treated, virtually guaranteed with incarceration. Furthermore, fragmented families are created when non-threatening females are denied constant access to and interaction with their children, significantly increasing the risks of inter-generational problems. Finally, current incarceration facilities require significant and unsustainable funds, which the Department of Public Safety believes will be alleviated by gender-responsive services that would realize in excess of \$280,000 per year for every ten eligible non-violent female offenders.

To ensure that eligible female offenders adjust to greater independence as seamlessly and successfully as possible, we strongly urge you to support S.B. 1253.

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Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Laurie Temple
Staff Attorney and Legislative Program Director
ACLU of Hawaii

The ACLU has been the nation's guardian of liberty since 1925 and the ACLU of Hawaii since 1965 and works daily in the courts, legislatures and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties equally guaranteed to all by the Constitutions and laws of the United States and Hawaii. The ACLU works to ensure that the government does not violate our constitutional rights, including, but not limited to, freedom of speech, association and assembly, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, fair and equal treatment, and privacy. The ACLU network of volunteers and staff works throughout the islands to defend these rights, often advocating on behalf of minority groups that are the target of government discrimination. If the rights of society's most vulnerable members are denied, everyone's rights are imperiled.

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