

ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS

A RESOLUTION

NO. 2020 - 35

URGING THE GOVERNOR AND THE HAWAI'I STATE LEGISLATURE TO FUND THE HAWAI'I CORRECTIONAL SYSTEMS OVERSIGHT COMMISSION TO HIRE A COORDINATOR AND STAFF TO PERFORM AND EXECUTE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

WHEREAS, Hawai'i's criminal system is failing, as in just four decades, Hawai'i's combined jail and prison population increased 670% and its incarceration rate grew 400%, resulting in overcrowding, as the collective capacity of Hawai'i's facilities are 2491, while Hawai'i has 3527 inmates in state; and

WHEREAS, in the mid-1990s, Hawai'i sent inmates out of state to private correctional facilities as a solution to the state's overcrowded and dilapidated facilities; and

WHEREAS, as of the end of August 2020, Hawai'i had an additional 1,083 or 30% of its prison population at the Saguaro Correctional Center in Eloy, Arizona; and

WHEREAS, Hawai'i is only one of just a handful of states that send more than 20% of the prison population out of state; and

WHEREAS, even with all the outsourcing, Hawai'i's prisons and jails are severely overcrowded; and

WHEREAS, Hawai'i's correctional system disproportionately incarcerates Native Hawaiians who make up 37% of the prison population while only 21% of the general population; and

WHEREAS, an Office of Hawaiian Affairs study in 2010 found that Native Hawaiians were overrepresented at every stage of the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, the State of Hawai'i has not taken effective steps to address this overrepresentation, despite numerous studies and recommendations; and

WHEREAS, Hawai'i spends hundreds of millions of dollars on corrections each year while recidivism rates are poor, for parolees 53.3% and those that max out, the rate is 66%; and

WHEREAS, one widely known reason for the recidivism rates is the lack of relevant programming available to inmates as part of a transition or re-entry into community; and

WHEREAS, for decades social justice advocates in Hawai'i promoted and encouraged Hawai'i to make a paradigm shift in philosophy and approach from its archaic punitive framework of corrections to a rehabilitative or restorative one, much like other states in the union; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the Hawai'i State Legislature adopted House Concurrent Resolution 85 (HCR 85) and requested the formation of a task force to make recommendations to the legislature on ways to improve Hawai'i's correctional system, known as HCR 85 Task Force; and

WHEREAS, in December 2018, the HCR 85 Task Force completed its study and the report entitled "Creating Better Outcomes, Safer Communities: Final Report of the House Concurrent Resolution 85 Task Force on Prison Reform" was presented to the Hawai'i State Legislature 2019 Regular Session; and

WHEREAS, one recommendation from the report got momentum, and House Bill 1552, was introduced to establish the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission, create a position for an Oversight Coordinator, extend the sunset date of the Reentry Commission to January 1, 2020, repeal the Reentry Commission and Corrections Population Management Commission on January 1, 2020, and transfer all rights, powers, functions and duties of those commissions to the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission; and

WHEREAS, this bill was accepted and passed, and on July 2, 2019 Governor Ige signed this bill into law and became Act 179, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission was established with five members appointed; and

WHEREAS, one of the commission's first items of business was to hire a coordinator as prescribed by Act 179, but the commission is about a year behind schedule and has not received funding to hire this essential position; and

WHEREAS, that the funding of this commission will be the beginning of the transformation that the State of Hawai'i's criminal justice system is in dire need of, similar to that of other states; and

WHEREAS, that the funding of this commission will allow for the prison population management methods recommended by the HCR 85 Task Force; and

WHEREAS, without holding the State accountable to its own laws, Hawai'i's criminal justice system will remain in disarray while people and families are affected.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs at its 61st Annual Convention in held online, in the malama of Makali'i and the rising of 'Olekūkolu, this 22nd day of November 2020, urging the Governor and the Hawai'i State Legislature to fund the Hawai'i Correctional Systems Oversight Commission to hire a coordinator and staff to perform and execute the functions of the commission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission, as well as the Governor of the State of Hawai'i, President of the State Senate, Speaker of the State House of Representatives, Chair of the State Senate subject matter committee on Hawaiian Affairs, Chair of the State House subject matter committee on Hawaiian Affairs, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and all County Mayors.



The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted in the malama of Makali'i and the rising of 'Olekūkolu on the 22nd day of November 2020, at the 61st Annual Convention of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs held online.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hailama V.K.K. Farden". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Hailama V.K.K. Farden, President