

Aloha Christin,

Jess Heaney here from Ohana Ho'opakele.

Thank you for the meeting participation today.

1. As promised, heres the information I shared. Can you please add the materials referenced, info below, to the notes for my Testimony?

2. I am also adding another set of materials which is relevant to your strategic plan priorities.

See you next month.

Cheers,
Jess

1.

Since the Task Force will be studying other states parole system models, I would like to share a few tools from New York where there has been dedicated efforts across sectors to improve parole. In 2021, the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law (“Center”) at New York University School of Law , along with the Parole Preparation Project, issued a comprehensive report, “The Problem With Parole: New York State’s Failing System of Release,” documenting the vast racial disparities in parole release decisions. You can read it here: https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/PPP_NYU_ParoleReport_02.pdf

- 2023 Addendum:
- https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Parole-Board-Decisions-Report-Final_06-23.pdf

The “Unlocking Billions” report from the Center for Justice at Columbia University on the annual and projected savings of the passage of progressive justice reforms in New York is also helpful. <https://centerforjustice.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Final%20Unlocking%20Billions%20Report.pdf>

2.

- *Across the country, it has been proven that the best and only way to maintain healthy and manageable population limits is to reduce the reliance on caging people and to reduce the number of people sent to live in cages. Policies and procedures which California has used to reduce prison populations include: repealing sentence enhancements, improving elderly parole programs, sentence reductions, recategorization of certain felonies as misdemeanor convictions, and compassionate release.*
 - See the *Prison Closure Roadmap by Californians United for a Responsible Budget* for more about how California is advancing from prison depopulation to prison closure: https://curbprisonspending.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FILE_7463.pdf

- **Keep the populations lower by releasing all elders, people with chronic and life-threatening illnesses and conditions, and Vietnam war veterans.**
- *Elders and people deserving of compassionate care would be best served in a supportive community setting OUT OF PRISONS, with the tens of thousands the state spends on locking them up to go directly to healthcare, housing and supportive services.*
 - *Resource: “Elder Parole is an Aging Issue” By: CUNY (City University of New York) Hunter Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging: <https://brookdale.org/fact-sheet-elder-parole-is-an-aging-issue/>*
 - *We recommend that you do similar studies of need in Hawaii. These are good examples of research and organizational partnerships.*
- *Health Impact Partners, a public health equity organization which works nationally co-authored a 2023 report which provides public health evidence for investment in the following infrastructure for formerly incarcerated people:*
 - *Safe, stable, and affordable housing*
 - *Increased employment opportunities*
 - *Affordable health care*
 - *Accessible and reliable transportation*
 - *Non-carceral, non-punitive forms of accountability*
 - *We recommend that you read the report, consider the needs for Hawaii, and even reach out to Health Impact Partners for research or training collaboration: <https://humanimpact.org/hipprojects/healthnotwomensprisons/>*

The Brookings Institution released a 2021 report titled, “A better path forward for criminal justice.” The “Prisoner reentry” chapter has clear recommendations for medium and long term reforms to support reentry.

The report reads, “We must move away from a policy framework that focuses on punishment as a tool for controlling risk in favor of a focus on human rights, harm reduction, and the social, political, and economic reintegration of those who have been incarcerated.”

(Some recommendations include... see list at bottom.) We recommend that you read the full chapter here: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/a-better-path-forward-for-criminal-justice/>

Medium-Term Reforms

- *End restrictions on occupational licensing, safety net programs, and hiring for those with criminal records*
- *Expand and enforce anti-discrimination rules and regulations*
- *Enhance oversight and regulation of the criminal background check industry*
- *Increase funding for subsidized employment programs and American Job Centers*
- *Spur the creation of coordinated pre- to post-release education and work-based learning programs*

- *Update outdated security rules and technology policies in correctional facilities that limit the development of new rehabilitation programming*
- *Expand internet access in correctional facilities*
- *Modernize state and local data systems to improve service coordination and research*

Long-Term Reforms

- *Reorient parole and other forms of community supervision toward social and economic reintegration*
- *Increase access to services related to housing, employment, health/addiction, and social reintegration*
- *Improve rehabilitation services in correctional facilities by adopting a continuity of care model*
- *Expand funding for prison rehabilitation programming to meet demand*