

October 19, 2023

For HCSOC (Oversight Commission) meeting –Public Comment

Van Kahumoku, Ohana Ho'opakele- Public comment

Notes are transcribed from a 10/18/2023 conversation with Jess H, Ohana Ho'opakele, to be read at the 10/19/2023 HCSOC meeting

Topic: “Breaking Cycles” Symposium followup

What should we remind the Oversight Commission and other hosts/guests of the “Breaking Cycles Symposium”? What needs to be part of the Legislative priorities planning?

- Issues for native Hawaiians: We need to re-do a lot of our infrastructure [that has been changed by settler colonialism]. In order to re-do infrastructure, we need to re-do many other things- water rights, access to land/ land ownership; meaningful livelihood (income or in-kind ways to support oneself).
- We want to improve the Native Infrastructure.
 - o *Jess: This is relevant to bring here because every state Department in Hawaii that has a disproportionate violent and extractive impact on native people has a kulena to restore balance, people to the land, and to do better in your planning and function. Department of Public Safety has an extractive relationship with native Hawaiians; we can think about Re-entry and all parts of the system as responsible for improving native infrastructure, not damaging it or people.*
- **People need sufficient funds to rebuild themselves:**
 - o **Homes to call their own and be part of community**
 - o **Income or source of livelihood**
 - o **→ Build strong communities**
 - o **People need to be able to help its own people. Family takes responsibility for that person.**
- We don't need to have so many rules; when people become a part of community, then they become that community. **No need: “Good/bad; in/out;” we need to restore balance and right relationship instead. Ho'oponopono and Pu'uhonuas in districts help strong communities.**
- [The Oversight Commission] needs to understand that we have a nation in its inception- a nation being rebuilt and developed. **People who were here before- Native Hawaiians- had land insurance.**
 - o **Think about this with re-entry planning.**
- I liked the analogy [from Norway], “Wait for him [the prisoner] to come down [from the tree].”
- We need **community choice**- people choose into the support, into the housing, the food, but they **have the choice** (resources and care are available) and they **get to make the choice** (its not coerced or forced). We need **voluntary care**.
- We need **first responders in all categories. And raise their salaries; they deserve to be paid better.** We need to increase resources for community support roles. Increase community capacity to respond better. Then people will have good jobs (8 hour shifts, good pay) and community will have resources staffed 24 hours (24 hours: more jobs).
- **We need to head in that direction.**
- People cannot do hurtful things for long.

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- We need to find a middle road for negotiations. All communities and native hawaiians might not accept all the Oversight or Prison Departments ideas—*and they do not have to accept them*.
- **But the objective is to get to the top of the mountain.** Some people will take longer to get there. (There needs to be choice, and some people will go their own way and take longer.) The best path is to love your neighbor, love your family, let love prevail. **When you have that direction, the the direction serves as a morality motivator. You do well by others and then yourself. But you have to be free to do this; it cannot be in a jail or prison.**
- **We want community self-determination.**