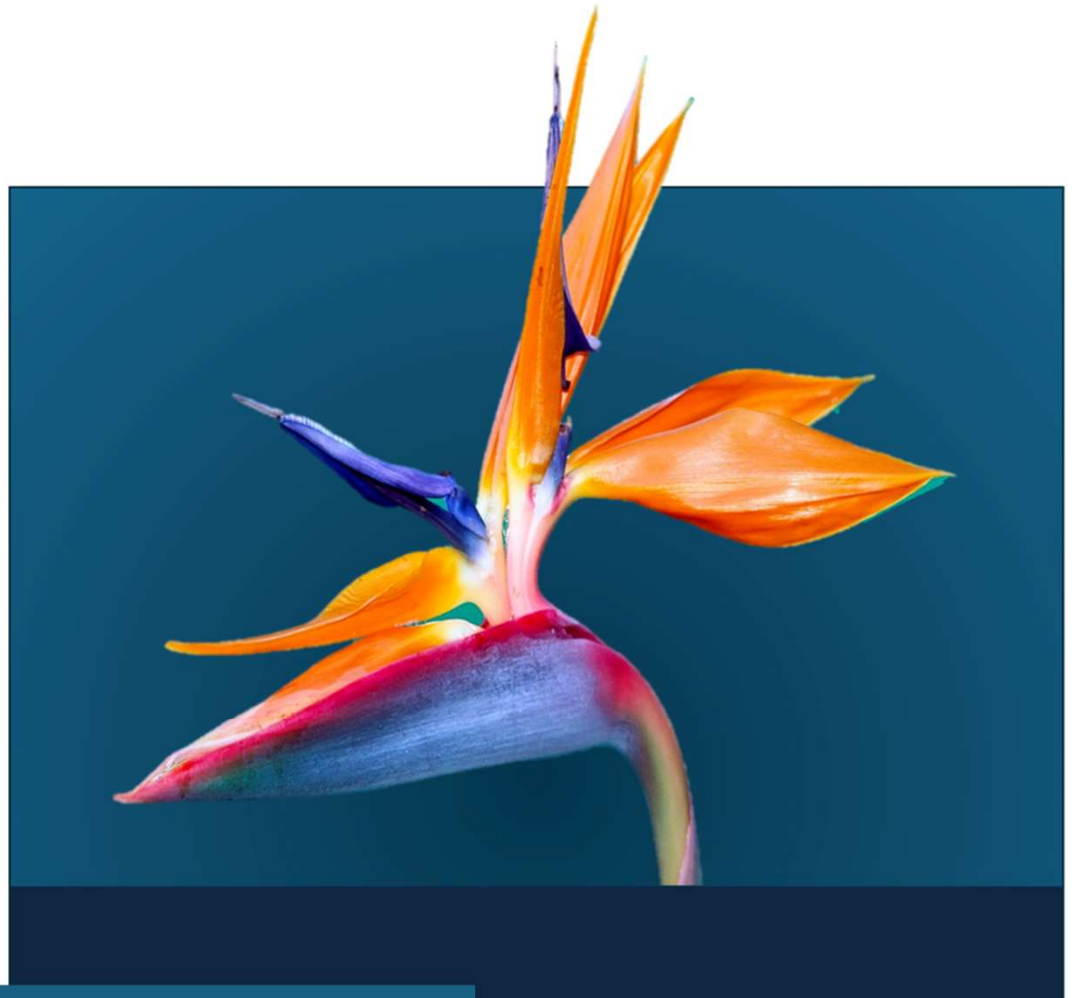


# Hoe Amau

The current state of reentry in Hawaii.

*Hoe amau (pull for the shore) represents the desperate effort to reach a safe and stable place, symbolizing the hope for salvation and opportunity for a new beginning.*



Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

# HCSOC Mandate

§353L-3(b)(1)

Oversee the State's correctional system, investigate complaints, and facilitating a correctional system transition to a rehabilitative and therapeutic model

§353L-3(b)(2)

Set population limits for each correctional facility and implement policies to prevent exceeding capacity

§353L-3(b)(3)

Work with the DCR in monitoring and reviewing the comprehensive offender reentry program and make recommendations to DCR, HPA, and the legislature

§353L-3(b)(4)

Ensure the comprehensive offender reentry system under Chapter 353H is providing necessary programs and services to support timely releases at minimums

# Methodology

## Procedure for This Report



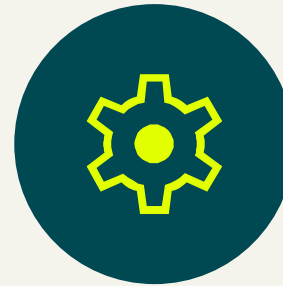
Facility Tours



Stakeholders  
Engagement



Data Request to DCR  
& HPA



Research



Report Review

# Three Elements of Systemic Change



## Section 1: VISION

Where we are going

- Clearly defines where the system is headed

## Section 2: CURRENT STATE

Where we are now

- Identifies current challenges, strengths, and gaps

## Section 3: REALIZING THE VISION

How to get there

- Outlines actionable steps to transform the current system and achieve the established vision

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# Section I

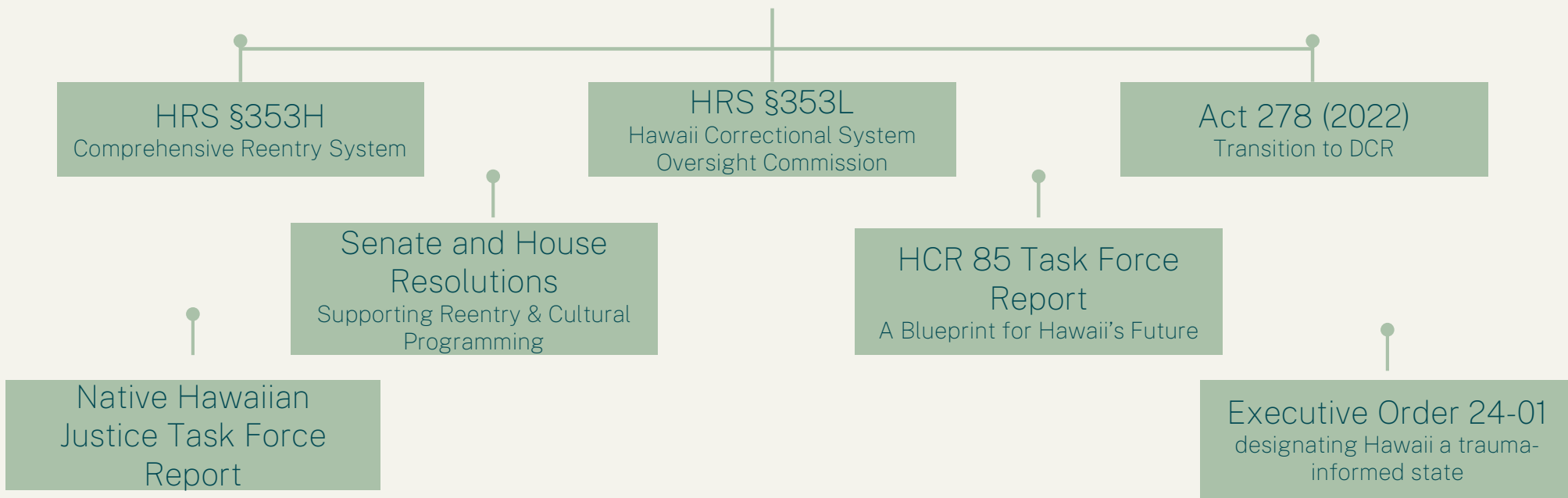
# HAWAII'S VISION

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Where we are going

# Hawaii's Vision for Corrections & Rehabilitation

## Key Foundational Documents and Policies



# HCR 85 Task Force Report

*Vision: A justice system that is rooted in cultural values, protects rights and liberties, promotes safety, peace, understanding, and reconciliation, and restores communities while affirming the value of every person who comes into contact with the system.*

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: focus on the root causes of crime, not just the symptoms

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2: reaffirm each person's inherent humanity and continuity of citizenship

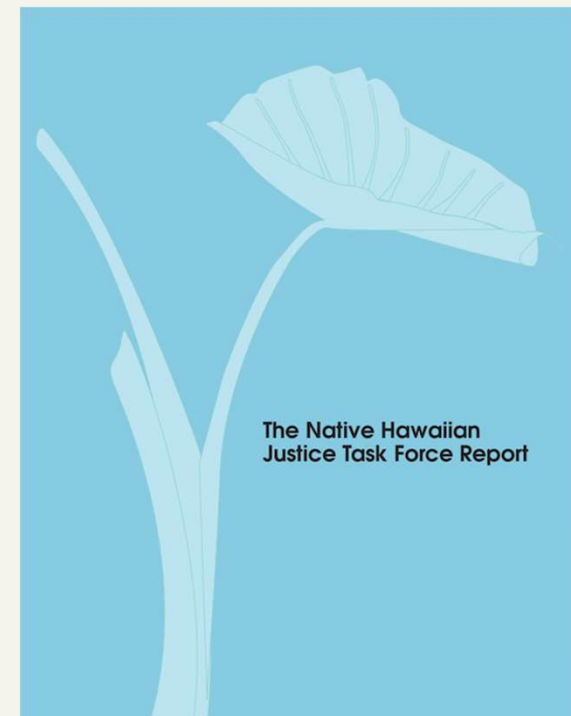
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: focus on accountability and rehabilitation instead of retribution



# The Native Hawaiian Justice Task Force Report

Native Hawaiian overrepresentation in Hawaii's criminal justice system calls for culturally specific reforms.

*“Native Hawaiians have suffered from severe intergenerational, historical, and political trauma. Any effort to reduce the number of Native Hawaiians who come in contact with the criminal justice system must include a multi-pronged approach to addressing this trauma.”*





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# Section II

# CURRENT STATE OF REENTRY

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Where we are now

## HRS §353H-2.5 Offender Reentry Office

*The Reentry Office is mandated to develop and implement a comprehensive reentry system to support successful reintegration. Key responsibilities include risk assessments, program matching, progress monitoring, training, and collaboration with HPA, work furlough programs, and community partners.*

**Partially Implemented – Additional Actions Required**  
*Findings: Compliance Varies*

Severe Staffing Shortages

Reentry Plan Needs Strengthening & there is Limited Reentry Support in Jails

Dedicated Efforts, Limited Resources – Staff and volunteers remain committed despite challenges.

Challenges connecting PIC with resources in the community

## HRS §353H-3 Offender Reentry System Plan; Creation

*DCR must create a comprehensive reentry system to reduce recidivism and support reintegration, ensure reentry planning begins on day one, incorporate gender-responsive programming, strengthen community partnerships, and implement model reentry programs*

**Partially Implemented – Significant Gaps Remain Findings:  
Compliance Varies**

The Comprehensive Offender Reentry Plan (CORP) has not been updated since 2019

Reentry planning from day one is not consistently implemented across all facilities

Programs lack independent evaluation and gender responsiveness

Compliance Areas: Risk assessments, transitional programs, and partnerships

## HRS §353H-4 Model Programs; Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

*Requires structured model programs to reduce recidivism through highly skilled staff, individualized case management, life skills development, family support, and strong community partnerships*

### **Not Implemented - Actions Required** *Findings: Compliance Varies*

Existing programs fall short of model program standards, lacking individualized case management, a full continuum of care, and highly skilled staff

Life skills workshops do not align with model program standards

Programs provided primarily focus on general reentry services, but do not meet the structured requirements outlined for model programs

Children's Day & Community Resource Fairs recognized as impactful initiatives

## HRS §353H-5 Children of Incarcerated Parents; Families

### Not in Compliance – Action Needed

No policies ensure parents are placed in facilities based on the best interest of the family (§353H-5(1))

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No policies support placement based on the capacity to maintain parent-child contact (§353H-5(2))

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No research conducted on how incarceration affects children, due to lack of funding (§353H-5(3))

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No studies conducted on the long-term impact of incarceration on fathers and their children (§353H-5(4))

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# HRS §353H-6 Employment

**Not in Compliance – Immediate Action Needed**

**Employment & Training Access (§353H-6(a))** – No collaboration between DCR and Department of Labor & Industrial Relations to provide employment, training, life skills, and education opportunities for PIC and those reentering the community

**Employer Tax Incentives (§353H-6(b))** – No development of tax incentives by DCR, the Department of Taxation, or DLIR to encourage employers to hire formerly incarcerated individuals

## HRS §353H-7 Return of Out-of-State Individuals in Custody

*People in custody must return to Hawaii at least one year before their parole/release date to participate in reentry programs near their support network*

### Mostly not in compliance

**Findings** (Nov. 2022 – Oct. 2023, Total: 625 Individuals Identified):

- **53% (331 PIC)** did not return to Hawaii within one year of their parole/release date
- **47% (294 PIC)** did return to Hawaii within the required timeframe
- DCR's transfer policy does not specify that individuals be returned to Hawaii one year prior to release

DCR is fulfilling the report requirements outlined in §353H-7(c)

# HRS §353H-7

## Return of Out-of-State Individuals in Custody

Reason Individual in Custody has not Returned to Hawaii	Number
Non-compliance in programs (i.e. Refuse programs, termination of programs) resulting in Medium Custody	97
High/Greatest category misconducts within last 18 months resulting in Medium Custody	135
Escape history within past 7 years from community/minimum custody facility, resulting in higher custody level	19
Detainers (i.e. Immigration, Federal, State) that precludes minimum custody housing	24
Refuse to work furlough programs & parole; wants to max out resulting in Medium Custody	51
Pending parole release to another state other than Hawaii (Interstate)	5
Pending available bed space at furlough program	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>331</b>



## HRS §353H-8 Performance Indicator Reporting

*The sections requires DCR to develop measurable performance indicators to assess progress in reducing recidivism, staff turnover, assaults on staff, and improving departmental efficiencies. Additionally, DCR must track the key performance indicators as outlined in the statute*

### **Partially Implemented – Additional Actions Required** ***Findings: Compliance Varies***

Compliance varied, with some required metrics fully reported while others were missing or incomplete

Lacking measurable performance indicators on recidivism, staff turnover, decreasing assaults on staff, or departmental efficiencies

Concerning Trends in Reported Data - Low program completion rates and limited restorative justice access

DCR Plans to Update Reporting – DCR Committed to aligning §353H-8 & §353H-9 with statutory requirements

## HRS §353H-9 Annual Reporting Requirements

*DCR must submit an annual report to the Legislature detailing key performance indicators for rehabilitation and reentry efforts—including program success rates, participant data, reasons for non-completion, program availability, and other metrics to ensure transparency and effectiveness in reentry services*

### **Partially Implemented – Additional Actions Required** *Findings: Compliance Varies*

Incomplete Reporting – Missing data on success rates, participant completion, admission criteria, available positions, and discontinued programs

Limited Program Evaluation – Gaps in data prevent full assessment of programs

DCR Plans to Update Reporting – DCR Committed to aligning §353H-8 & §353H-9 with statutory requirements

## HRS §353H-31 Reentry Programs and Services

The section allows DCR to authorize service contracts in 27 different listed categories for reentry programs and services

### Partially Implemented – Additional Action Required

#### Findings

- Contracts exist for housing, substance abuse treatment, job placement, family therapy, and domestic violence intervention
- Gaps exist in supervision, ID documents, permanent housing, employment assistance, barriers to visitation, healthcare, and reentry courts
- Transitional housing is underutilized – 50% occupancy for women, 70-80% for men, with severe gaps on neighbor islands

DCR is fully in compliance with §353H-31(a) which allows the Director to authorize contracts

## HRS §353H-32 Reentry; Identification Documents

Ensuring people in custody receive necessary ID documents before release.

### Mostly Not in Compliance

- DCR and Department of Transportation are not consistently informing PIC of available ID assistance or prioritizing assistance for those within one year of release (§353H-32(a))
- No confirmation that required forms are provided at least 90 days before release for those in work furlough or community placement (§353H-32(c))

### Not in Compliance




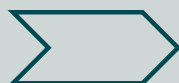
- Forms are primarily in English and not translated into the primary languages of PIC, limiting accessibility

The HCSOC acknowledges DCRs ongoing collaboration with the DMV and the efforts to expand ID processing capabilities

# House and Senate Resolutions

## Resolution

## Determination

SR 82 (2023)	Reporting on assisting PIC obtaining IDs		Fully in compliance with Reporting Requirements.
SR 84 (2021)	Dismantle barriers to ID provision		Mostly not in compliance – Only 150 IDs issued–32 at no cost – out of 10,580 releases
SCR 25 (2021)	Establish faith pods based on Kapu Aloha		Not in compliance – No action taken
HCR 171 (2021)	Recognize the value of culture-based rehabilitation		Mostly not in compliance – Limited offerings, not scaled to meet population needs
SCR 108 (2021)	Increase investment in reentry programs		Mostly in compliance – Acknowledges current efforts and urges further expansion

# Education & Programs

## High School Equivalency:

- 30 completions

**Gap in Completion:** 422 PIC at AZSC still need GED completion to meet recommended program requirements

## College Programs:

- Total Enrolled: 338
- Courses Completed (for credit): 134
- Degrees Earned:
  - Associate's Degree (Chaminade University): 7
  - Additional AA & Bachelor's Degrees (AZ): Several AAs, 1 Bachelor's
  - College Certificates Earned: 19

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# Key Findings: Release & Parole Data

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## Key Findings:

- Max-Out Rates Are High (Nov. 2022 to Oct. 2023):
    - Paroled: 53% (367 individuals)
    - Maxed Out (No Parole/Furlough): 47% (324 individuals)
    - At HCF, 67%, 251 out of 376 PIC maxed out, with only 33% paroled
  - People who max out have higher recidivism rates and lower post-release success
-

# Key Findings: Release & Parole Data (cont.)

## Key Findings:

- **No Parole Denial Tracking:** No system tracks how many parole denials result from incomplete programs, limiting assessment under §353L-3(b)(4)
- **36% of Felony Sentences Extend Beyond Minimum:** 821 individuals remained in custody beyond parole eligibility, increasing financial and population burdens at AZSC
- **Limited Pathways for Early Release:** Of 142 individuals who applied for sentence reductions, only 19 were approved (13%). Sentence reduction is the only option for early release in the absence of good time credit



# Reentry System Highlights



Staff Contributions to Rehabilitative Progress

Dedicated staff across Hawaii's correctional facilities drive rehabilitative progress despite limited resources.

Fostering Connections Through Resource Fairs

Provides direct access to critical reentry resources.

Advancing Rehabilitation at WCF, KCF, & WCCC

Waiawa & Kulani – Recognized as the most rehabilitative in Hawaii, with the Kulani farm offering one of the best rehabilitation opportunities in the State.

WCCC has made significant strides in transitioning to a rehabilitative model.

Community Partnerships Driving Rehabilitation and Support

Hawaii has a rich network of community organizations supporting reintegration and rehabilitation, along with advocacy groups supporting systemic justice reform and culturally rooted solutions.

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# Section III

# REALIZING THE VISION

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How to get there - Recommendations

# Recommendations

Part I: Statutory Compliance with the Comprehensive Offender Reentry System

**§353H**

Review statutory compliance

Part II: Statewide Reentry: Programs, Education, Treatment, and Transitional Services

**§353L-3(b)(3)**

Monitor and review reentry

Part III: Facilitating a Correctional System Transition to a Rehabilitative and Therapeutic Model

**§353L-3(b)(1)**

Transitioning to a rehabilitative and therapeutic model

Part IV: Preventing Overcrowding and Ensuring Timely Release on Parole

**§353L-3(b)(2)  
& §353L-3(b)(4)**

Prevent the correctional population from exceeding facility capacity & ensure timely release at minimums

# Recommendations

## Part I: Statutory Compliance with §353H (cont.)

### Key Recommendations:

- **§353H-2.5:** Expand reentry and case management staffing, enhance reentry checklist, and standardize and strengthen jail reentry planning.
- **§353H-3:** Revise CORP to align with the rehabilitative model.
- **§353H-4:** Implement model programs that meet statutory requirements.
- **§353H-6:** Strengthen partnerships with state agencies.
- **§353H-7:** Return PIC from out-of-state facilities at least one year before parole or release, conduct an independent investigation into barriers to timely return.
- **§353H-8 & §353H-9:** Define and track performance indicators for program effectiveness and revise the reporting process to meet statutory compliance.
- **§353H-32:** Provide IDs upon release.

# Recommendations

## Part II: Statewide Reentry §353L-3(b)(3)

### Education and Programs

Expanding access to education by strengthening opportunities and program accessibility is key to improving outcomes.

**Key recommendations:** Prioritize GED completion, expand dedicated education staffing and resources, and develop a statewide college network.

### Treatment

Enhancing program effectiveness and addressing gaps in availability to improve rehabilitation opportunities, reduce idle time, and increase successful outcomes.

**Key recommendations:** Conduct independent program reviews, implement a Lifers and Longtimers Pod at AZSC, and equip all people in custody with tablets.

### Rehabilitative and Transitional Services

Expanding access to stable housing and strengthening community partnerships are essential to improving reentry outcomes and ensuring successful post-incarceration transitions.

**Key recommendations:** Partner with Unite Us and strengthen community partnerships.

# Recommendations

## Part III: Transition to a Rehabilitative and Therapeutic Model; §353L-3(b)(1)

### Rehabilitative Model

Shifting to a rehabilitative model requires updating policies, procedures, and practices to align with the new vision for corrections and rehabilitation.

**Key recommendations:** Develop new policies and procedures aligned with foundational documents, implement in-person visitation at all facilities, and create a strategic plan for returning all people in custody to Hawaii.

### Trauma-Informed Care

Recognizing the trauma experienced by people in custody and providing treatment options and appropriate care while addressing the unique needs of specific populations.

**Key recommendations:** Implement trauma-informed care training and offer trauma treatment, standardize human-centered language, and partner with Amend.

### Transform Facilities into Pu'uhonua

Integrate Native Hawaiian cultural practices into the correctional system to address to promote healing, and support successful reentry.

**Key recommendations:** Establish system-wide Native Hawaiian cultural programs and faith pods.

# Recommendations

## Part IV: Preventing Overcrowding and Ensuring Timely Release on Parole; §353L-3(b)(2) & §353L-3(b)(4)

### Educational and Programs

Ensuring timely release on parole requires addressing systemic barriers, improving data collection, and identifying opportunities for sentence reduction.

**Key recommendations:** enhancing HPA data collection and conducting an independent analysis to investigate barriers to parole release and sentence reductions.



# Hoe Amau

It is the author's profound hope that this report serves as a catalyst for furthering meaningful transformation and a guiding framework for building a new system.

The author holds deep faith in and appreciation for that state of Hawaii and its people.

Achieving this vision will require continued collaboration and partnership with all stakeholders dedicated to creating a more rehabilitative and effective correctional system, which is entirely possible through shared commitment and effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important work.