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HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
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TO: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair
House Committee on Public Safety

FROM: Mark Patterson, Chair
Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission

SUBJECT: House Bill 2044, Relating to Offender Reentry
Hearing: Wednesday, February 4, 2026; 9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 411

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) submits testimony in **support** of House Bill 2044, relating to offender reentry, which expands programming and training for the comprehensive offender reentry program under the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to reduce the rate of recidivism and increase inmate marketability.

This bill aligns directly with the Commission's mandate to support Hawaii's transition toward a rehabilitative and therapeutic correctional model. The proposed amendments target key drivers of recidivism, including low educational attainment, limited job skills, unemployment, emotional dysregulation, and insufficient life skills. By addressing these barriers during incarceration, the bill increases the likelihood of successful reintegration and strengthens long-term public safety.

The measure modernizes Hawaii's correctional approach by embedding education pathways, strengthening career training aligned with real-world labor market needs, expanding mentorship and counseling supports, and building stronger employment pipelines. These reforms shift the system away from a punitive, custodial framework and toward one focused on rehabilitation, accountability, and economic stability.

Expanding access to job training, educational programming, and structured reentry services is a proven strategy for reducing reoffending. Individuals who leave custody with marketable skills, credentials, and employment opportunities are more likely to remain stable, support their families, and avoid returning to the justice system. Over time, these investments reduce correctional costs and ease strain on communities, courts, and public resources.

Should you have additional questions, the Oversight Coordinator, Christin Johnson, can be reached at 808-849-3580 or at christin.m.johnson@hawaii.gov. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.