

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**  
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TO: The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair  
The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

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

SUBJECT: House Bill 2494, Relating to Criminal Justice Reform  
Hearing: Thursday, February 19, 2026; 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Room 325

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) **supports in part** House Bill 2494, relating to criminal justice reform which represents an important step toward reducing unnecessary incarceration by prioritizing citations in lieu of arrest for low-level offenses.

Unnecessary custodial arrests for petty misdemeanors and violations contribute directly to correctional system overcrowding in Hawaii. Many individuals arrested for low-level offenses do not pose a significant public safety risk, yet arrests often result in pretrial detention due to inability to afford bail. Even short periods of incarceration increase correctional population pressures, strain staffing and facility resources, and contribute to system inefficiencies.

It is important to note that incarceration can cause serious collateral consequences, including disruption to employment, housing, and family stability. These harms often occur before any determination of guilt and can have lasting impacts on individuals and their families. Expanding the use of citations instead of arrest allows individuals to remain in the community while still ensuring accountability through the court process. This approach reduces the number of people entering correctional facilities unnecessarily and helps preserve limited correctional capacity for individuals who present genuine risks to public safety. For these reasons, the Commission supports in part House Bill 2494.

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