



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs
Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

By

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SB 2532 – RELATING TO PRISONS

Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair DeCoite, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 2532 relating to the establishment within the Department of Public Safety (DPS) of a working group to reduce recidivism by providing business education to inmates.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) is generally supportive of this effort for the reasons described in the bill. Reducing recidivism and providing inmates with meaningful educational opportunities will positively benefit the citizens of Hawai'i and have a positive economic benefit for the state.

The bill establishes a working group, but it is unclear if the intent of the working group is to develop the relevant curriculum or study the possible application of an existing curriculum in Hawai'i. Additionally, there is no description of who would serve on this working group or how it would be convened. We would seek additional clarification regarding both the working group and the commitment required by the UH to develop the relevant programs as the bill only specifies that the DPS will contract with an accredited university but does not specify how DPS will select that university.

Given that the bill appropriates funding for 2022-2023 to implement a pilot program, but such a program does not exist yet, it would seem that either a pre-existing program is contemplated or the timing of developing the program will have to be very quick. Additional information as to how a pilot program relates to the working group would be helpful.

Overall, we would respectfully request additional clarification of the intent for the working group, the expectations for the pilot program, and the possible role the University of Hawai'i would play in this critical work.