

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, Chair

Rep. Ken Ito, Vice Chair

Friday, January 22, 2010

Room 325, 2:00 PM

HB 1752 – RELATING TO REPEAT OFFENDERS

STRONG SUPPORT OF INTENT with Amendments

Hawai`i cannot afford to continue pretending that mandatory minimum sentencing of nonviolent lawbreakers is the most effective means of protecting our communities. This fantasy is costing the state too much money and taking limited state resources away from proven crime diversion programs, such as our public education system.

The purpose of a fully funded public education system is not to prevent crime; however, increasing educational opportunities in our society does increase the opportunity for all members of our society to succeed.

As I mentioned to State Budget and Finance Director Georgina Kawamura at the Board of Education Committee on Budget and Fiscal Accountability Meeting on June 22, 2009: The Lingle-Aiona administration is going to have to decide which institution it wants to prioritize: either you send non-violent lawbreakers into more effective treatment programs or you send our students home from school. As you know the Governor chose to direct funding to prisons instead of schools, whereby furloughing our students into the streets instead of furloughing non-violent lawbreakers into more effective treatment programs.

From 2000-2009, the budget for the Department of Public Safety rose 75.5%. In the last decade (2000-2009) the budget for contract prisons has risen 192%. These increases surpass the percentage increase in the Education budget many times over.

Please amend this bill to divert nonviolent lawbreakers into more effective, and less costly programs, such as the HOPE Probation program. And divert the short-term and long-term saving into our state's public education system.

Sincerely,

Kim Coco Iwamoto, Member of the Hawai`i State Board of Education