



**OHA-6
HB204/SB433**

Data Collection on Children with Incarcerated Parents

This bill takes a long-awaited first step towards identifying and addressing the unique needs of Hawai'i's keiki with incarcerated parents, by requiring the Department of Public Safety to collect intake data relating to parents in prison and their children.

A growing body of national research shows that children whose parents are sent to jail or prison may experience great trauma as a result of their parents' incarceration. For example, these children may face separation from their families, displacement from their homes, social stigmas, emotional isolation, and a lack of financial and other resources. As a result, children with incarcerated parents often suffer from emotional distress, developmental challenges, poor academic performance, aggressive behavior, and absenteeism in school. In the long-term, these children may also be much more likely to enter the criminal justice system themselves.

Unfortunately, Hawai'i lacks even basic data on the number and needs of Hawai'i's keiki with incarcerated parents, severely hindering efforts to comprehensively address the harms they may be experiencing. This bill seeks to implement recommendations made by a legislative task force studying the issue in 2006 and 2008, by having the Department of Public Safety utilize its existing prisoner intake process and form to collect basic data about these keiki.

WHY SHOULD WE SUPPORT HB204/SB433?

- HB204/SB433 is an investment in the long-term health and well-being of Hawai'i's keiki and communities, and the Native Hawaiian community in particular. Demographic data indicate that Native Hawaiian children are likely to be disproportionately impacted by the trauma of having parents sent to prison.¹ They may suffer from these impacts for the rest of their lives and perpetuate cycles of poverty and involvement with the criminal justice system.
- Comprehensive data collection may increase access to grant funding, create more consistent services for keiki of incarcerated parents, and reduce the number of children that fall through the cracks. With better data, service providers could strengthen their applications for grants and better ensure continuity of services in the long term. Without a system of comprehensive data collection, service providers must rely on

¹ Native Hawaiians are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, accounting for 39% of the incarcerated population (Native Hawaiians represent just 24% of the general population). Native Hawaiians are also more likely to have children in their households than other state households in the state. 2013 OHA Databook Table 1.31.



word of mouth and on their own internal data to identify such children and address their unique needs. Such data may be proprietary and may be inconsistently collected as funding for programming fluctuates.

- Comprehensively addressing the needs of children with parents in prison will benefit all of the people of Hawai‘i in the long term. Successful programs and services will help improve academic outcomes and the social development of children, reduce the likelihood of the children themselves getting into trouble with the law, and may even reduce the recidivism of incarcerated parents who develop stronger parent-child relationships. This bill is a necessary first step towards comprehensively identifying and addressing the needs of keiki with incarcerated parents.