



BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS

Hawaii State Legislature
March 14, 2018

Senate Bill 2705 SD2
Public-Private Partnerships

Aloha Chair Evans, Vice-Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committees,

The Ka Lāhui Hawaii Political Action Committee (KPAC) opposes Senate Bill 2305 which establishes public-private coordinator positions within the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism giving this office the power to enter into agreements up to 65 years with private entities without getting prior approval from the legislature or any elected official and without following procurement law.

According to Dr. RaeDeen Keahiolalo-Karasuda, in her doctoral dissertation, *The Colonial Carceral and Prison Politics in Hawai‘i*, Kanaka Maoli make up more than 60% of inmates in Hawai‘i, however, they only make up 24% of Hawai‘i’s population. KPAC is concerned with the impact this legislation will have on the hundreds of Kanaka Maoli inmates and their families if jails and prisons in Hawai‘i are allowed to be run by for profit private corporations where incarceration is ‘good for business’.

Hawai‘i’s criminal justice system that have historically and systematically targeted the indigenous peoples of this land starting with the criminalization of our traditional beliefs and practices till today where Kanaka Maoli are more likely to serve prison time and receive longer sentences than any other ethnic group in Hawai‘i. This measure will commodify the bodies of Kanaka Maoli making it even more desirable for the State and private prison corporations to incarcerate rather than to rehabilitate.

Privatizing Hawai‘i’s correctional facilities is a step in the wrong direction we should be looking at criminal justice reform. There have been numerous studies and recommendations from the Justice Center, Native Hawaiian Task Forces and Pu‘uhonua Advisory Groups that have yet to be implemented.

KPAC is also concerned on the impact this measure will have on restricting and raising the price of other public services and on recreational services.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Healani Sonoda-Pale
Chair, KPAC