



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

**Testimony to the
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor**

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

and

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair**

Tuesday, February 28, 2017, 9:45 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

by

Calvin C. Ching, Deputy Chief Court Administrator
District Court of the First Circuit

Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill No. 718, Relating to the Community Court Outreach Project.

Purpose: Establishes a community court outreach project in the city and county of Honolulu, from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020, subject to availability of funds and memoranda from the Judiciary, prosecuting attorney and public defender. Appropriates funds.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports Senate Bill No. 718.

The district court criminal calendars include numerous cases involving nonviolent offenders, many of whom face multiple life challenges, such as substance abuse, mental health issues and the inability to provide themselves and/or their families with basic needs of food and housing. In an effort to address some of these cases, the community court outreach project ("community outreach court") would allow the Judiciary to collaborate with the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, the Department of the Public Defender and various community organizations to provide meaningful solutions to the problems facing these nonviolent offenders and to prevent recidivism.



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In his State of the Judiciary Address on January 25, 2017, the Chief Justice commended Honolulu Prosecutor Keith Kaneshiro and state Public Defender Jack Tonaki for putting these ideas into action through a program called Community Outreach Courts. The Chief Justice further stated, "The ultimate goal is to send the court and a treatment team out into the community and offer these nonviolent offenders an opportunity to resolve pending cases, obtain needed service and move forward with their lives."

Subsequently, on January 26, 2017, the Judiciary, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, the Office of the Public Defender, successfully held the first session of this court in Honolulu District Court. The next step is to mobilize this court into the community.

To implement and ensure the continuous success of this court, the Judiciary can provide: 1) a judge - for the community outreach court; 2) the ability to hold court sessions at locations (other than traditional courthouses) where offenders can more easily access court proceedings without taking time off from work, traveling substantial distances to traditional courtrooms and/or securing necessary child care; and 3) data on the progress of the community outreach court using the Judiciary's Information Management System (JIMS).

The Judiciary will also need the following to manage and staff this mobile community outreach court:

1) one (1) new, full-time program coordinator to plan, develop, implement, and coordinate this court's operations and activities with the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, the Office of the Public Defender and various community organizations;

2) one (1) new, full-time court clerk position to record and execute the court's orders and dispositions;

3) one (1) new, full-time court bailiff position to manage the court's calendar and court proceeding;

4) one (1) new, full-time social worker assigned to the Judiciary's community service sentencing program to screen and coordinate the multitude of community services for the defendants with various government and private sector agencies, and monitor and report on the defendants' compliance; and



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5) associated computer and peripheral equipment, and office supplies dedicated for this court's disposition and remote connectivity to JIMS.

Additionally, safety and security is a concern when taking the court staff to other locations away from traditional courthouses (similar to when hearings are held at the Hawaii State Hospital); therefore, assistance from the Department of Public Safety will be required.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.