



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

November 30, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: SENATOR CLARENCE K. NISHIHARA, CHAIR
PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

FROM: SENATOR KURT FEVELLA, SENATE DISTRICT 19

RE: INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING

I am writing to request an informational briefing be scheduled before the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs with representatives of the Department of Public Safety (PSD) to discuss the critical staff shortages of adult correctional officer at the State's prisons and jails.

In an effort to respond to staffing concerns brought to my attention, I met with the Acting Warden of Halawa Correctional Facility on Monday, November 29, 2021. During this site visit, I was informed that only 58 of the 91 correctional officers required for the morning shift at the facility were posted at work, leaving 33 positions vacant or on leave. I also learned that it is common practice for officers to work 16 hour shifts due to the dire staff shortage of adult correctional officers. Also, on November 29th, a correctional officer worked a total 64-hour shift. This required the Acting Warden to direct staff to confirm whether a family member could provide home transportation, otherwise, staff would be directed to provide transportation to the correctional officer's home.

These work conditions present a potentially dangerous situation for exhausted correctional officers who are not at the top of their game when interacting with prison inmates, but also a risk to the general public on our roads and highways. While the PSD acknowledges they are dealing with a staffing shortage, decisive action must follow to meet mandates to provide care and safe custody of inmates and to maintain operations for the safety and security of facility staff.

I look forward to your response to this request.

cc: Senate President Ronald D. Kouchi