

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1037 -08

Honolulu, Hawaii

Feb 29, 2008

RE: H.B. No. 2973  
H.D. 2

Honorable Calvin K.Y. Say  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2008  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Finance, to which was referred H.B. No. 2973, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to help Hawaii's children reach their full potential as individuals and citizens, beginning at birth, by:

- (1) Establishing an early learning system (System) that ensures a spectrum of quality early learning opportunities for children throughout the state, from birth until the time they enter kindergarten;
- (2) Creating and appropriating funds for the Early Learning Council (Council) to develop and administer the System;
- (3) Establishing and appropriating funds for the Keiki First Steps Program which focuses on the coordination, improvement, and expansion of existing programs and services within the System for three- and four-year-old children in the state, with priority to underserved or at-risk children; and
- (4) Statutorily establishing the Pre-Plus Program, the goal of which is to increase the supply of suitable classrooms for early childhood programs statewide, by

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requiring the Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop suitable Pre-Plus classrooms on DOE campuses statewide, for early childhood education programs.

DOE, the University of Hawaii System, Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force, Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Aloha United Way, Hawaii Educational Policy Center, Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc., and several concerned individuals testified in support of this bill. The Office of the Governor opposed this measure. DHS, the Department of Budget and Finance, Office of Information Practices, Early Childhood Task Force, Kamehameha Schools, Center on Disability Studies, Good Beginnings Alliance, many members of the Good Beginnings Alliance, and several concerned individuals offered comments.

Your Committee has amended this bill by, among other things:

- (1) Clarifying the purpose language;
- (2) Changing the name of the Keiki First Steps Program to the "Three- and Four-Year-Old Program" (Program), and naming the System, "Keiki First Steps";
- (3) Clarifying that the Council is to administer the System to the extent permissible by law, or administer only state-funded programs and services;
- (4) Amending the definition of "at-risk children" to include children whose family income is no more than 250 percent of the federal poverty level, rather than 200 percent;
- (5) Clarifying that children do not have to be screened to be determined "at-risk" for academic failure;
- (6) Including in the System, home visiting services designed to promote early childhood development and early learning;
- (7) Specifying that the System shall provide sufficient numbers of well-qualified educators and administrators;
- (8) Including, as part of the Council's duties, the coordination of efforts to develop a highly qualified,



stable, and diverse workforce, and adding to the list of workforce development initiatives, including:

- (A) Ensuring that more early childhood educators and administrators, existing or potential, have opportunities to receive early childhood education degrees, including offering higher education scholarships;
  - (B) Providing access to continuing professional development for all educators and administrators; and
  - (C) Establishing a structure for standardized roles across the early learning system and for incentives such as awarding credentials to staff who have reached certain levels of achievement;
- (9) Clarifying that the Council may not directly provide fiscal resources to programs and services in the System, but shall determine the appropriate proportion of state funds that should be distributed;
- (10) Changing the membership and provisions of the Council, including:
- (A) Removing the representative from the Office of the Governor, adding a representative of non-center-based child care program providers, and specifying that certain members are to be appointed;
  - (B) Allowing the Council to form workgroups and subcommittees, exempt from the laws relating to public agency meetings and records;
  - (C) Subjecting Council meetings to the laws relating to public agency meetings and records;
  - (D) Removing the rulemaking authority from the Council;
  - (E) Reimbursing Council members for expenses necessary for the performance of their duties; and
  - (F) Authorizing an executive director and staff for the Council;

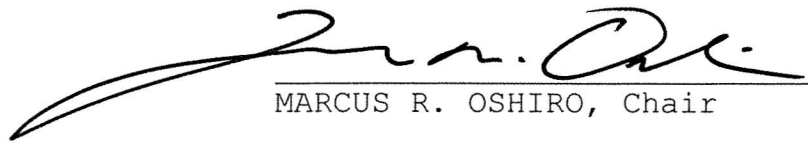


- (11) Specifying that the Program is to be developed by the Council, but administered by DHS;
- (12) Including some of the components of the Program as part of the Council's responsibilities, as certain components apply to the System as a whole and not just to programs and services for three- and four-year-olds, including:
  - (A) Developing incentives to enhance quality in programs and services; and
  - (B) Developing an effective, comprehensive, and integrated system to provide training and technical support to, and to monitor, programs and services within the System, to ensure that quality standards are met;
- (13) Specifying that the Program consists of DHS awarding grants to early learning programs and services that serve three- and four-year-olds and meet the criteria developed by the Council, including:
  - (A) What was formerly listed as "components" of the Program;
  - (B) The implementation of evidence-based and culturally responsive models of service delivery; and
  - (C) Minimum scheduling requirements;
- (14) Establishing and appropriating funds into the Keiki First Steps Special Fund to be used for the expenses of the Council and System;
- (15) Statutorily establishing the Pre-Plus Program in DHS rather than in DOE statute, but requiring DHS to work closely with DOE to develop suitable Pre-Plus programs on DOE campuses;
- (16) Changing its effective date to July 1, 2020, to encourage further discussion; and
- (17) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for clarity, consistency, and style.



As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Finance that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2973, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2973, H.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Finance,

  
MARCUS R. OSHIRO, Chair



Record of Votes of the Committee on Finance

Bill/Resolution No.: <b>HB 2973</b>	Committee Referral: <b>FIN</b>	Date: <b>2-27-2008</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on the measure.				
The recommendation is to: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended (as is) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments (HD) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold <input type="checkbox"/> Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)				
FIN Members	Ayes	Ayes (WR)	Nays	Excused
1. OSHIRO, Marcus R. (C)	✓			
2. LEE, Marilyn B. (VC)	✓			
3. AWANA, Karen Leinani	✓			
4. BELATTI, Della Au	✓			
5. BROWER, Tom	✓			
6. CARROLL, Mele				✓
7. HANOHANO, Faye P.	✓			
8. HAR, Sharon E.				✓
9. KARAMATSU, Jon Riki	✓			
10. MAGAOAY, Michael Y.	✓			
11. MANAHAN, Joey	✓			
12. MIZUNO, John	✓			
13. NAKASONE, Bob				✓
14. RHOADS, Karl	✓			
15. SAGUM, Roland D., III	✓			
16. TOKIOKA, James Kunane	✓			
17. MEYER, Colleen Rose		✓		
18. PINE, Kymberly Marcos	✓			
19. WARD, Gene, Ph.D.				✓
TOTAL (19)	14	1	0	4
The recommendation is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted If joint referral, _____ did not support recommendation. committee acronym(s)				
Vice Chair's or designee's signature: <u>Marilyn B. Lee</u>				
Distribution: Original (White) – Committee Duplicate (Yellow) – Chief Clerk's Office				