

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



LATE Testimony

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In reply, please refer to:
File:

House Committees on Health and Human Services and Housing

H.B. 1999, Relating to Health

Testimony of Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, M.D. Director of Health

January 23, 2008, 9:00 a.m.

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) appreciates the intent of this measure and
2 already has several efforts to address the early identification and intervention/treatment for hearing and
3 vision concerns. The Department acknowledges that resources would be necessary to fully implement
4 and evaluate a mandated screening program for children; however, we are concerned that such an
5 appropriation would adversely impact priorities as set forth in the Executive Supplemental Budget.
6 **Fiscal Implications:** An unspecified amount in general funds is appropriated for FY 2009.
7 **Purpose and Justification:** This bill establishes a hearing and vision screening program for newborns,
8 pre-kindergartners, and children in school grades 3, 5, 8, and 11. Screening, early identification, and
9 intervention/treatment for vision and hearing will help children in their ability to learn in school, through
10 supporting the development of language, cognitive, and social skills. Early childhood screening
11 contributes toward achieving the community goal that "All children will be safe, healthy, and ready to
12 succeed in school." Survey and other data indicate the need to improve screening.

13 The DOH currently supports hearing and vision screening through the Newborn Hearing
14 Screening Program and provision of funding to community health centers statewide for primary care
15 services for the uninsured. A former DOH School Health Hearing and Vision Program (mandated by

1 HRS §321-101) provided hearing and vision screening, but was abolished in 1995 due to budgetary
2 restrictions and the program not being deemed a critical public health function.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.