

Date of Hearing: January 26, 2008

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

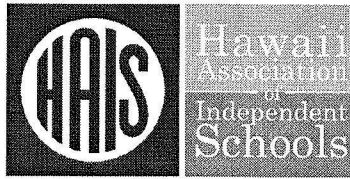
Title: H.B. 2973, Relating to Early Learning

Purpose: Creates the Early Learning Council to govern the state's early learning system. Establishes an early learning system. Establishes the Keiki First Steps Program.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) is in full support of this bill. This bill will allow the work of the Early Learning Educational Task Force to continue, and ultimately ensure that the developmental and early learning needs of young children are equitably addressed throughout the state.

The Department welcomes the opportunity to continue working with its early childhood partners, in both public and private settings, to ensure universal access to quality early learning opportunities. Our collective efforts will help young children to be at optimal levels of readiness for learning, particularly as they make the transition into a K-12 learning system.

With respect to the management of the early learning council and its work, the Department would recommend that the bill be amended to include basic administrative and clerical support staff. With this amendment, the Department is committed to provide the Early Learning Council with appropriate administrative guidance and assistance.



January 26, 2008
9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 309

TESTIMONY TO
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: HB2973 – Relating to Early Learning

Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Witt and, as executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), I am here today to testify on behalf of the Association's board of directors, and thereby on behalf of its 96 member schools.

We are in support of the proposals outlined in HB 2973, and plan to be involved in the hearings concerning the good ideas in this bill. As an active participant in both the work of the Act 259 Task Force and the efforts which led up to its establishment, the HAIS Board of Directors voted unanimously this past week to support the Task Force's recommendations regarding the establishment of an early learning system in Hawaii and to utilize the public dialogue initiated by both the Task Force's January 2008 legislative briefing and this bill as an opportunity to engage all sectors of the private school community in discussion about our state's urgent need for high-quality early learning opportunities.

Our association is proud to be a regular contributor in the educational dialogue of our community. We believe that the betterment of humankind is inherently possible, and that education is prominent among the forces which can stimulate positive change. Furthermore, we have always been passionate advocates for early childhood education, have supported measures before this committee in the past that have advanced efforts to address the needs of young children, and have partnerships with such early childhood organizations as Good Beginnings Alliance, the Keiki Childcare Coalition, and others.

"First steps" is an apt metaphor. Yes, it calls to mind the first steps of children, but let us take our own first steps and resolve to make a commitment to all of Hawaii's keiki by approving a measure by the end of this session that will allow us to create a universally accessible, comprehensive and instructionally rigorous early childhood system.

Personal Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Education

January 26, 2008, 9:00 am, Room 309

by

Donald B. Young, Acting Dean
College of Education
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2973: Relating to Early Learning

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Donald Young. I am serving as the Acting Dean for the College of Education at the UH Manoa. Today I am providing personal testimony on HB 2973, which creates the Early Learning Council to govern the state's early learning system and establishes an early learning system, Keiki First Steps Program.

HB 2973 incorporates a number of recommendations from the Act 259 Task Force in which the University actively participated. I believe that high-quality universal preschool programs are essential to the future of our state. There is overwhelming evidence that children who begin their K-12 education ready to learn are more likely to succeed in school. Early attention to key elements of literacy helps ensure that a child is able to read by third grade, a critical factor in school achievement. Success in school is related to a better prepared workforce and to college-going behavior.

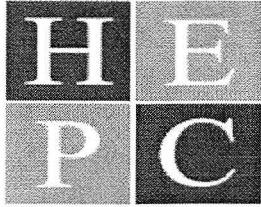
HB 2973 targets at-risk populations in developing a statewide early learning system. These are the students least likely to have access to high-quality early learning experiences. The bill also supports the preparation of highly qualified educators to serve our children.

I believe that our state should join the vast majority of other states in supporting a comprehensive early learning system.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENT

I respectfully offer an amendment to the bill. Since teacher workforce development is an essential part of providing for the success of any early learning system, university/college representation responsible for teacher preparation should be included on the Early Learning Council in addition to the University President. Further, we suggest that a research component be included to document the development and implementation process and resulting outcomes.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



HAWAI'I EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER
Informing the Education Community

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Education

January 25, 2008, 9:00 am, Room 309

By

Valere McFarland, Associate Director
Hawaii Educational Policy Center
University of Hawaii at Mānoa

HB 2973: Relating to Early Learning

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Educational Policy Center supports H.B. 2973, which incorporates the recommendations of the Hawaii Early Learning Task Force. The Task Force was charged in Act 259 with examining a broad range of complex issues and making recommendations to address early learning needs. They set forth these recommendations in a report to the 2008 Legislature. We commend the members of the Task Force for meeting its challenge to develop a five year plan of action for an early learning system and their thoughtful deliberations on providing for optimal childhood learning and development. The Task Force Report clearly demonstrates the learning gap that exists in a large number of children entering Hawai'i's public schools.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS

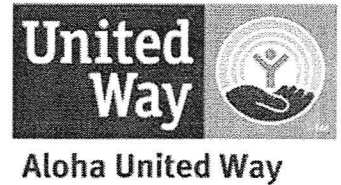
While HB 2973 incorporates the basic recommendations of the Task Force, we realize that more details will need to be provided to definitively direct the establishment of an early learning system. We respectfully submit the following recommended amendments to HB 2973:

1. The College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa plays a significant role in providing training for early childhood educators. We recommend including the Dean of the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa or the Dean's designee on the Early Learning Council.
2. We recommend including a research component that will allow the Early Learning Council to develop research-based policies and innovative practices that encourage quality learning and development that will sustain social and economic progress. The research component would provide documentation of the development and implementation process and resulting outcomes.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Aloha United Way

200 N. Vineyard Blvd., Suite 700
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-3938
Telephone (808) 536-1951
Fax (808) 543-2222
www.auw.org



January 25, 2008

House Committee on Education
Rep. Roy M. Takumi, Chair
Rep. Lyla B. Berg, Ph.D., Vice Chair
Saturday, January 26, 2008 at 9:00 A.M.
Conference Room 309 – 45 copies

HB 2973 – Strong Support

Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way strongly encourages your favorable consideration of HB 2973 which creates the Early Learning Council and the state's early learning system known as Keiki First.

Keiki First is the outcome of the Act 259 Task Force and is the first step in a process that will create a comprehensive early learning system for Hawaii's children. An alarming 40% of our children arrive at kindergarten so far behind their peers that their success in our education system is questionable. When children don't succeed in school they require additional services, are over represented in the juvenile justice system and fail to achieve the skills necessary to live a self-sufficient life as adults. An early investment in our children will significantly reduce the added cost to society in future years – national studies indicate that a \$1 investment in early childhood development will save \$7 in future costs.

Aloha United Way is cognizant that 2008 will be a difficult year financially. We fully understand that the legislature will have to make some very tough choices. We believe that Keiki First deserves the highest priority because it addresses at its the root a key cause of poor school performance – a lack of readiness for school.

Simply put, Keiki First presents the legislature with the opportunity to positively and significantly impact our future – our Keiki. We must begin this long process of establishing our early learning system. To help inform this process, Aloha United Way has produced a report with the UH Center on the Family entitled School Readiness in Hawaii. We hope you will find it helpful as you consider this important issue. Aloha United Way thanks you for your consideration and we strongly encourage favorable consideration of HB 2973

Sincerely:



Susan Doyle
President & Chief Professional Officer

berg1-Liz

From: dana davidson [drdanadavidson@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, January 25, 2008 3:29 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: Testimony in support of HB 2973

EDNtestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

January 25, 2008

To: Hawaii State House of Representatives, Committee on Education

From: Dana H. Davidson, PhD., member of Good Beginnings Alliance Board of Directors

Re.: [HB 2973](#)

Please accept this testimony in strong support of the Act 259 bill. While not all the points are delineated as yet, we still need this bill to move forward. If you need any encouragement to support this bill, consider that Cyrus Belt was a toddler that probably could have been saved- and a tragedy prevented- if he had been in a system of care with trained professionals and family life education and support available to his poor family.

The state of Hawaii must step forward and support our keiki, and this session is the time to do so. We need a 0-5 system that offers quality, involves parents, includes parent choices, and supports the development of early childhood professionals. We can do this by building a strong system that links families with young children to services and care.

This is the first step, let us take it for Cyrus and other children like him.

Thank you for your support.

Date of Hearing: January 26, 2008
Time: 9:00 A.M.

Committee: House Education Committee
Committee Meeting Room 309

Agency Testifying: Palolo Valley Homes Federal Project
Jan Ii, Vice President of Ohana Residents Association

Title: House Bill 2973

Good morning, Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg and members of the House Education Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of House Bill 2973

My name is Jan Ii; I'm a resident of Palolo Valley Home Federal Project as well as the Vice President of our Ohana Residents Association.

Before I became a peer mentor, I worked for fast food for 23 years, 15 years in management. My third child really had a hard time when she entered kindergarten because she had no early childhood experience. She didn't know how to write her name, she didn't know her alphabets, numbers or even how to hold a pencil. I felt bad as a parent, that it was my fault that I didn't give my daughter the opportunity to play and learn. Today, she is doing very well in the first grade. In 2007, Palolo Valley Homes Federal Housing Project started its play and learn groups; I made sure my youngest went. My youngest has learned so much from the play and learn group. She learned how to use a scissors safely, how to hold a writing tool of different materials, how to interact with other children, how to express herself thorough art, how to enjoy reading and being read too. When she entered kindergarten she could already identify her first and last name, her alphabets A-Z, she enjoyed doing homework and we as a family enjoy reading. It has taught me that early childhood education is very important in the early years. It has taught me how to be a better parent, a more patient parent and to provide my children with all the available resources they need to be the BEST that they can be.

In conclusion, I strongly support the intent of this bill to establish a quality early learning program for all of Hawaii's keiki's!—KEIKI FIRST!

berg1-Liz

From: Kevin Roberts [RobertKA@ah.org]
Sent: Friday, January 25, 2008 12:22 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Cc: davidtom@goodbeginnings.org
Subject: Support HB 2973 Early Learning Council Legislation

Submitter: Kevin A. Roberts
Committee: Committee on Education
Date/time of Hearing: January 26, 2008 9:00 am
Measure Number: HB 2973

Aloha,

My name is Kevin Roberts and I am president and CEO of Castle Medical Center and a member of the Act 259 Early Childhood Learning Task Force. I participate on this task force as a representative from the Hawaii Business Roundtable, a networking organization of the largest businesses across Hawaii.

The Business Roundtable strongly supports the development of the Early Learning Council to govern the state's early learning system and the establishment of the Keiki First Steps Program. The Roundtable's support is motivated by the fact that we understand the importance of strengthening the educational fabric of Hawaii. This strengthening must begin at an early age and programs such as Keiki First have proven across the U.S. to have sustained and reliable results.

Though the investments for this program are substantial, we believe that this is necessary to help set the course for the children of Hawaii to be more successful in the future. We encourage you to support this proposal.

Mahalo,

Kevin A. Roberts

TO: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

January 25, 2008

FR: Amy Ng, Retired, Department of Education, Educational Specialist for Early Childhood Education

RE: HB 2973, Relating to Education

Representative Takumi and members of the House Committee on Education. It is a given that a child's early learning experiences impact a child's success in school and in later life.

Knowing this, please support HB 2973.

HB 2973 provides us the avenue to refine and to act on a measure that will impact not only young children but their families and communities. The investment is for a better Hawaii.

As a former teacher, principal and educational specialist who has served in the public school system for over 30 years, the time is critical that our lawmakers invest in what is needed and necessary.

Your continued interest and support is appreciated.

Please contact me should you have any questions.

Amy Ng
981607 Kaahumanu St.
Aiea, HI 96701
Ph. 295-5426

SUBMITTED BY: Gale McNish, Member
Good Beginnings Community Council - Maui

FOR HOUSE BILL 2973

DATE: January 26, 2008 9:00 A.M.

COMMITTEE: HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Members of the Committee:

I am strongly in support of House Bill 2973 and its intention to create an Early Learning Council and early learning system in the state of Hawaii. Such a system will enable families to access a range of quality early learning opportunities for their children.

I have lived and worked in the field of early childhood on Maui for over 30 years. During this time I have worked as a Head Start teacher, a DOE teacher, a teacher trainer, and a parent educator. I have served on the Good Beginnings Community Council – Maui since its inception when it was formed Under Act 77. As a result of this involvement, I have come to understand the issues surrounding early childhood education quite thoroughly, and I believe in the need for legislation such as this HB 2973 to address them. A system that is firmly rooted in the public sector, while also incorporating the current existing private programs and services, is one that can effectively meet the needs of Hawaii's families.

I want to thank the committee for its support of our young children through recognizing and incorporating the findings of the Act 259 Task Force. As revisions to this bill come forward from that Task Force, I would urge the committee to consider their suggestions carefully. We have a wonderful opportunity as a state to “get it right” from the start.

Mahalo.

Alexandria N. Domingo
Teacher II/Head Start(MEO, Inc.)
1/26/08, 9 a.m.
HB 2973

Aloha,

My name is Alexandria and I am a Teacher II with the Head Start Program here on Maui. I would first like to thank the committee and House for its support of our keiki, and can only hope for the continued support that our keiki deserve.

I fully support Act 259. Being both a parent and early childhood educator, I see the importance of children being able to have the opportunity to have an early education. Being on the front line, I can tell you that many families are both appreciative and supportive of their children's early education. As an early educator, we not only educate our children, but our families as well. This enhances our chances of having successful families out there in the crazy and hectic world we live in. With your support, the numbers would only increase. I agree, we are preparing our next generation. We definitely need qualified people for the job and your continued support would also increase the numbers in this as well.

I support any suggested revisions done by the Task Force. I know and trust that they are fully aware and knowledgeable in what is best for our keiki today and in the years to come.

Thank you for your time and your consideration and I truly hope that you will support our future, the next generation.

Mahalo,
Alexandria N. Domino

berg1-Liz

From: Jade Holter [jadeholter@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 24, 2008 9:52 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: Please Support ACT 259

TESTIMONY

Jade Holter
Assistant Toddler Teacher at The Montessori School of Maui and ECE Student at Maui
Community Collage

House Education Committee
1/26/08 9:00 AM

HB 2973

6 copies please,

I support Keiki First. Please make HB 2973 a reality so that I can follow my dreams of becoming an Early Childhood Educator for the children of Hawaii. Thank you for everything that you do for our keiki. I respect any revisions that may be suggested by the Early Learning Task Force.

Mahalo Nui!

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berg1-Liz

From: Lance Holter [holter@maui.net]
Sent: Thursday, January 24, 2008 9:16 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Cc: jadeholter@yahoo.com
Subject: In favor of HB2973

TESTIMONY

Lance Holter
Chairman, Maui Democratic Party
Past Chairman of Makawao School Community Council, 2005 and 2006

House Education Committee
1/26/08 9:00 AM

HB 2973

6 copies please,

I support Keiki First and thank the House for supporting our keiki. Please make HB 2973 a reality.

Lance Holter
579-9442
Email holter@maui.net

berg1-Liz

From: Andrea_Baer/LIHIKAI/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, January 24, 2008 11:41 AM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 2973

To: House Education Committee
Name: Andrea Baer
Title: Special Education Teacher
Re: HB 2973, date and time of the hearing: 1/26/08, 9 a.m.
Date: January 24, 2008

My name is Andrea Baer, and I have been a special education teacher on Maui for the last three and one-half years, as well as a part-time teacher for the DOE on Oahu since approximately 1999. I am testifying in favor of HB 2973, as long as it provides for age-appropriate, quality education given by experienced teachers.

berg1-Liz

From: Ailina Laborte [alaborte@patch-hi.org]
Sent: Thursday, January 24, 2008 11:23 AM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: Measure HB 2973

House Education Committee,

I support Keiki First and all that it is meant to implement. I believe in this measure for our Hawaii's keiki. I thank you, the committee and the House for its support for our keiki and that you support any suggested revisions by the task force.

Mahalo,

Ailina Laborte
PATCH Maui Coordinator
95 Mahalani St Suite 28-2-A
Wailuku, HI 96793
808-242-4786