

# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

## LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

LATE TESTIMONY



HB 2973 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Education

January 26, 2008 @ 9 a.m.

by

Linda K. Johnsrud  
Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy  
University of Hawai'i System

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HB2973 – Relating to Early Learning

Chair Takumi, Vice-Chair Berg, and Members of the Committee on Education:

I am Linda K. Johnsrud, Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy, University of Hawai'i System. On behalf of the University System, I am testifying in support of House Bill 2973, which establishes an early learning system for Hawai'i, creates an Early Learning Council to govern the system, and establishes the Keiki First Steps Program as a first phase.

The University of Hawai'i is a strong advocate of measures to increase the success of Hawai'i's students as they move through the educational pipeline from birth through adulthood. We are an active partner in the Hawai'i P-20 Initiative, and firmly believe that higher education's role is critical if we are to improve the educational level of all of Hawai'i's citizens. The Kellogg Foundation Grant of \$10 million is an example of our efforts at statewide collaboration and commitment toward early childhood education at the community level.

As a partner in Hawaii's P-20 Initiative with Superintendent Pat Hamamoto and Good Beginnings President Liz Chun, we grapple with the questions as to what strategies are needed to ensure every child enters school ready to succeed, schools are ready for children, and early childhood professionals have access to education that will increase their capacity to teach and nurture the young learner.

We believe there must be a concerted effort to provide quality early education for Hawai'i's keiki, to ensure the elementary schools are ready for the young learner, and to commit to higher education's support for expanding the statewide capacity to educate the early childhood professional.

We know that ultimately how successfully children progress through the educational pipeline will affect their entrance into higher education and lifelong learning.

Although the University of Hawai'i is not specifically mentioned in House Bill 2973, may I offer that, as the only system of public higher education in the state, your university will work hand in hand with the early learning system to provide the preservice education and professional development for a well-qualified early childhood workforce that is referenced in the language of the bill.

Four of our community colleges, Honolulu, Hawai'i, Kaua'i, and Maui Community College offer courses in early childhood education leading to an Associate of Science Degree. These programs are articulated with the Bachelor of Arts degree in the Social Sciences with a concentration in Early Childhood Education from the University of Hawai'i at West O'ahu. The College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa offers a Bachelor of Education with a focus in Early Childhood Education. A Master's Degree of Education in Early Childhood Education was approved by the Board of Regents in March 2002.

These programs provide pathways to degrees and improved educational qualifications for those in the early education profession, including associate teachers, lead teachers, and center directors. In the very short term, the University of Hawai'i has the capacity to increase the numbers of students that we serve in our programs. In the longer term, we will need resources to build capacity in order to meet anticipated workforce needs. The system academic planning and policy office would work with each of our campuses to plan as a system to address the needs we anticipate. For example, we would need to increase the number and type of courses, programs, and delivery methods to improve access for targeted regions and populations; to add support staff to tutor and remediate returning adults who must update their basic skills while seeking credentials; to work with early childhood centers to recruit students, promote job placements, and ensure that we are being responsive to the early childhood professional community.

The intent of HB2973 is to move the state toward a comprehensive early childhood system, a direction that the University of Hawai'i fully supports. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

LATE TESTIMONY

From: Linda Buck  
Coordinator, Early Childhood Programs  
Honolulu Community College

Date: Saturday, January 27, 2008  
9:00 a.m., Room 309

**Subject: HB2973, Relating to Early Learning**

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the House Committee on Education, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB2973. I am Linda Buck, Coordinator of Early Childhood Programs at Honolulu Community College and an alternate to the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force, representing the University of Hawaii Community College system.

**I concur with the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force in its strong support for the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.**

Hawai'i has a long history of providing education and care for its youngest citizens, primarily through the efforts of the private sector in response to the desire to support the participation of a variety of cultures in mainstream society and to the high degree of workforce participation by parents and guardians of young children. The opportunity to increase public support to this important endeavor is commendable.

I have been involved in various task forces and initiatives striving to bring coherence and support to early childhood education and care in Hawai'i for twenty years. I have also studied the work of other states in early childhood system building and taught a course in public policy related to early education in the Masters Program in Early Childhood Education at UH-Manoa College of Education. From this vantage point I can sincerely state that the Act 259 Task Force has provided you with a report and recommendations that combine not only the best in current understanding of how to create and sustain an early learning system but also the consensus of a large and representative group of critical stakeholders in the outcomes of such a system. Implementation details have been left to the entity that will be responsible for the system, as they should be, but the solid foundation of policies to guide system building and the solidly researched cost projections provide a road map to success. I recommend that the proposed Early Learning Council and the administrative entity charged with development of the Early Learning System be required to consult and take seriously the recommendations of the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force.



## Testimony in Support of HB 2973 intent

The emphasis on workforce development in the first few years is critical to the long-term success of the Early Learning System, as well-educated and trained teachers are required if quality learning experiences are to be provided for Hawai'i's keiki. Support to the University of Hawaii Early Childhood Education teacher preparation programs to expand access through new modalities such as distance learning, to maintain and strengthen research-based teacher preparation curriculum and to support cultural diversity in the early education workforce will be essential. The faculty of these programs has a history of working collegially as a system to enable students to achieve their educational goals. Most recently we established a full articulation among the UH Community Colleges Early Childhood Programs and a new concentration in Early Childhood Education in the Social Sciences Program at UH-West Oahu. Now any early educator or prospective early educator in the state can obtain a bachelors degree in early childhood education. We hope to continue to be proactive in supporting the need for highly qualified teachers in the Early Learning System with your support.

Thank you for your support of early learning and Keiki First.

Linda Buck, Coordinator, Early Childhood Programs  
Honolulu Community College



LATE TESTIMONY

## KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education  
Hearing Date: Saturday, January 26, 2008  
9:00 a.m. – Conference Room 309

By Christopher Pating  
Vice President, Strategic Planning & Implementation  
Kamehameha Schools

Friday, January 25, 2008

Re: HB 2973 - Relating to Early Learning

Good morning Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg and members of the Education Committee. My name is Christopher Pating and I am Vice President, Strategic Planning & Implementation for Kamehameha Schools. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on HB 2973.

Kamehameha Schools applauds the legislature for its interest in establishing an early learning program and enhancing the early education opportunities of children across the state. We have been participating extensively in the Early Learning Education Task Force established by the legislature and strongly support the Task Force's report. We look forward to participating in on going dialog on this critically important matter and ask you to support advancing this measure.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is a statewide educational system supported by a trust endowed by Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, whose mission is to improve the capability and well-being of Native Hawaiian children through education. We serve 5,400 K-12 students through campus programs on O'ahu, Hawai'i and Maui, and 1,317 three-and-four-year-olds at 31 preschool sites statewide. Last year, we provided \$4.4 million in scholarships to 850 keiki attending community preschools.

Since its inception more than 20 years ago, the Kamehameha Schools Early Childhood Education (ECE) Division has provided more than 11,000 keiki with their first preschool experience. Early childhood education and parental support is the cornerstone of the Education Strategic Plan adopted in 2005, which seeks to foster long-term intergenerational change in the way Native Hawaiian families approach learning. Research demonstrates that early education is a key factor in lifelong success for all children, and we strongly urge the legislature to promote, enhance and support the efforts of the State of Hawai'i to appropriately address the needs of Hawai'i's pre-kindergarten children.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Education  
January 26, 2008 at 9:00am

by  
Tammi Chun  
Executive Director, Hawai'i P-20 Initiative, University of Hawai'i

HB 2973 - Relating to Early Learning

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

My name is Tammi Chun, and I am the Executive Director of the Hawai'i P-20 Initiative: United in Learning. On behalf of the Hawai'i P-20 Initiative, I am testifying in support of House Bill 2973, which establishes an early learning system for the state, creates the Early Learning Council to govern this system, and establishes the Keiki First Steps Program.

Hawai'i P-20 is a statewide collaboration that is working to better integrate Hawai'i's early childhood, K-12, and higher education systems in order to provide a smoother educational pathway for students to persist to higher skills and academic success.

P-20's primary goal is to dramatically increase the educational capital of the state by facilitating access to education for all of Hawai'i's people, so that all will be better able to contribute to their families, the community and the state's economy.

We realize that early learning is a significant factor in any individual's progress through the learning pipeline. Toward that end, the P-20 Initiative has undertaken as one of its key projects a "P-3 Initiative," funded by a \$10 million/eight year grant from the W.K.Kellogg Foundation. The initiative centers on the goal of having all third grade children reading at grade level by 2014. Clearly, children must enter kindergarten with the necessary pre-literacy skills in order for this goal to be reached.

To attain this goal, Hawai'i must focus on supporting both the family and early learning programs so that they will provide a book-rich environment for every keiki. Hawai'i has the opportunity as laid out within the Act 259 Early Learning Task Force Report to the 2008 Legislature to build a quality early childhood system in Hawaii.

This focus on early education and children birth to eight years of age makes good economic sense. The 2005 Economic Impact study sponsored by Good Beginnings Alliance demonstrated the critical role early education and care plays in our state's economy. The industry not only employs over 9400 people and generates \$240 million yearly in people's income, it is also allows over \$5 million income annually to be generated because parents can work due to their child's placement in early education and care.

Even more so in Hawai'i, there is a moral responsibility to ensure that all of our children start their years healthy, safe, and engaged learners. This strong foundation will pay off in our state's future. We cannot afford to neglect these years; this is truly an investment we must make.

Because HB 2973 seeks to provide a plan for sustainable services within the context of recommendations from the Act 259 task force, the Hawai'i P-20 Initiative supports the intent of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. Should you need any additional information about P-20 support of this bill, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force**

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

From: Liz Chun  
Executive Director, Good Beginnings Alliance

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

**Subject: HB2973, Relating to Early Learning**

LATE TESTIMONY

**The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force strongly supports the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.**

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the House Committee on Education. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB2973. I am Liz Chun, Executive Director of the Good Beginnings Alliance and a member of the Early Learning Educational Task Force. I have been working in the field of early childhood education over 30 years, and I can think of no finer calling in life.

Brain research tells us that children begin their learning even before they are born and that nearly 85% of a child's intellect, personality and social skills are developed by age 5. Additionally by age 6, there are large and preventable gaps between the development and academic abilities of high and low income children. High-quality early childhood education programs help make up these gaps in educational, social, emotional, and physical outcomes, especially for high-risk, low-income children. Moreover, society as a whole benefits too, as both educators and noted economists have demonstrated that investing in quality early experiences has short and long-term savings for us as a society in lower special education, high school dropouts, adult incarceration, and welfare.

Hawai'i, like many states, is grappling with how to best serve our children in the years before kindergarten. Almost 40% of our young children in Hawai'i come from families who cannot afford to send their children to early education programs. The early childhood programs that do receive federal and state subsidies – such as Head Start - are filled to capacity and have waiting lists. This is troubling because low-income families require this support if they are to seek employment and lift themselves out of poverty.

We also recognize an increased number of "gap group" families. These parents earn too much to qualify for federal or state need-based subsidies or programs such as Head Start, and yet do not earn enough to pay for preschool tuition. Their choices of placements for young children are limited, often not stable, and of unknown quality.

We have made some progress in increasing capacity. The 2001 Legislature with the support of then Lieutenant Governor Hirono allocated \$5 million for the biennium to

## Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force

build preschool facilities on elementary school campuses. This program, known as **Pre Plus**, is now a very successful public/private partnership. Private agencies are contracted to operate the preschool programs on public school land. **PrePlus** resulted in the construction of 16 new preschool sites allowing over 300 preschool children to be served.

However, we must increase our investment if we are to accommodate the growing demand for early education. We don't have enough facilities to meet the need, nor do we have enough qualified teachers.

The Keiki First Program described in our task force report is not just about increasing access but also improving quality. We regularly hear about our public schools' challenges to improve academic achievement. Well, quality early learning will provide the strong foundation for our children's lifelong learning. Currently, many of our young children are entering kindergarten not prepared for success in school. The 2007 Hawai'i State School Readiness Assessment reports that in more than 80% of our kindergarten classes, most of the students unable to demonstrate the literacy skills needed to succeed in kindergarten.

While 60% of entering public school kindergarten children attended some preschool or formal early learning experiences before kindergarten, a significant percentage of children had **no** such experience. Even for those children lucky enough to attend preschool, the quality of their early education programs is not even. We estimate that nearly 7,000 children are currently in programs that need quality improvements to instruction and program. Approximately 22% of our preschool programs are nationally accredited mostly by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Hawaii has been fortunate to have an ongoing mentoring program for early childhood programs seeking National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation. However, Hawaii needs new investment to encourage programs to seek accreditation and gradually address program improvements leading to higher quality.

Additionally, our current teacher resources are woefully lacking. To meet the 80% access goal of providing quality early learning to 4-year-olds, we estimate we will need 370 new early education teachers with an additional 470 new recruits for associate teachers. Furthermore, 310 of our existing teachers will require more early childhood education courses, and 200 existing teachers will need to attain a bachelor's degree. We essentially need to *double* our early childhood educator workforce immediately if we are to provide access to quality early learning to our 4-year-olds. Our teachers will need scholarships and loan forgiveness. Our public universities will need incentives to provide expanded access to early childhood education courses. Further, our early childhood programs will need quality improvement funding.

The real question is not, "how can we afford it," but instead, "how can we not afford it?" Our children, and ultimately our communities, our state, and our country will greatly benefit by adopting and funding Keiki First. Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and we offer our help to the Committee to craft this bill to best meet the needs of Hawai'i's young children.

**Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Education  
Conference Room 309**

**January 26, 2008 at 9:00am**

**HB 2973 - Relating to Early Learning**

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

My name is Kathryn Matayoshi, Executive Director of the Hawai`i Business Roundtable. I am testifying in support of the intent of House Bill 2973, which establishes an early learning system for the state, creates the Early Learning Council to govern this system, and establishes the Keiki First Steps Program.

The Hawai`i Business Roundtable understands that quality early learning experiences are critical to a child's success in school, and ultimately in college or work. As part of its work in education and in support of the importance of the early years, the Roundtable has supported the P-20 Initiative and its "P-3 Initiative", which is funded by the W.K.Kellogg Foundation. The initiative centers on the goal of having all third grade children reading at grade level by 2014. Clearly, children must enter kindergarten with the necessary pre-literacy skills in order for this goal to be reached.

The Roundtable also supports the work of the Act 259 Early Learning Task Force, as set out in their Report to the 2008 Legislature on building a quality early childhood system in Hawaii. We see both the family and early learning programs as part of the picture in closing the achievement gap in education.

Emphasizing early education makes good economic sense. The 2005 Economic Impact study sponsored by Good Beginnings Alliance demonstrated the critical role early education and care plays in our state's economy. The industry not only employs over 9400 people and generates \$240 million yearly in people's income, it is also allows over \$5 million income annually to be generated because parents can work due to their child's placement in early education and care.

A strong system that provides access to quality early education for all children is part of a strong foundation that will anchor a bright future for our state and our families. Because HB 2973 seeks to provide a plan for sustainable services within the context of recommendations from the Act 259 task force, the Hawai`i Business Roundtable supports the intent of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



## Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

LATE TESTIMONY

From: Elaine Yamashita  
Co-Chair, Professional/Workforce Subcommittee

Date: Saturday, January 27, 2008  
9:00 a.m., Room 309

**Subject: HB2973, Relating to Early Learning**

**The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force strongly supports the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.**

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the House Committee on Education. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB2973. I am Elaine Yamashita, Co-Chair along with Christina Cox, of the Task Force's Professional/Workforce Development subcommittee. I represent the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges on the Task Force. Hawai'i, Honolulu, Kaua'i and Maui CCs house Associate in Science degrees that articulate into the UH West O'ahu BA Social Sciences, Early Childhood Specialization.

The community college students typically work full-time, have families, and come to school. Some are able to take more than two classes a semester, but many find two classes a good balance between family life, work, and school. This means many take up to six years to earn an Associate's degree. The report takes this and other factors that impact the workforce into account in its 10 year plan.

As a group of my Maui CC students told Sen. Baker in a presentation on Act 259, they are excited about the potential of being able to earn a decent living wage as they continue their education. They look forward to scholarships that may help them to finish their formal education in a more timely manner.

The Task Force was very cognizant of the issues around workforce development and how higher qualifications have to be linked to higher compensation, and those considerations are reflected in the report. There is a statewide shortage of qualified people to work in early childhood programs. The Programs and Workforce Development subcommittee met over the last year and a half to hammer out consensus decisions around qualifications and terms for staffing in the high quality programs that are envisioned. The current legislation could use more specificity from the report to assure that staff are highly qualified and adequately compensated, so that turnover is minimal, further assuring that children can build stable, healthy relationships with their teachers.

## **Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force**

The 10-year plan accommodates building the workforce to meet the current and future needs of this program. It does require state funding other than what is currently in place to provide the compensation commensurate with the proposed qualifications. As an educator in a state institution, I appreciate the fact that the state subsidizes my salary – I know that student tuition does not cover the full cost of my salary and benefits. The report's potential funding mechanisms are similar to the higher education system, with student tuition, state subsidies, and other funding streams (scholarships, grants, etc.) in place.

The Task Force and its subcommittees have drawn on and will continue to depend on the best thinking in the state and from national experts to refine its proposals. We are happy to assist in redrafting the legislation to reflect the professional development, workforce, and other issues and to answer any questions for the committee.



## Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

LATE TESTIMONY

From: Kathy Murphy  
Co-Chair, Early Learning Educational Task Force (Act 259)

Date: Saturday, January 27, 2008  
9:00 a.m., Room 309

**Subject: HB2973, Relating to Early Learning**

**The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force strongly supports the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.**

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the House Committee on Education. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB2973. I am Kathy Murphy, Co-Chair along with Bob Peters, of the Early Learning Educational Task Force. As many of you know, I am also the Executive Director of Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children and have been working in the early childhood education field for over 25 years. I strongly believe in the outstanding value of quality education for all children, and this has been my life's work and passion.

Our task force has worked very hard over the last 18 months to develop a quality early learning system for Hawai'i's 4-year-olds, which culminated in our final report to the Legislature and our Keiki First Program. We have come a long way to come to consensus on areas such as:

- Hawaii Preschool Content standards for 4 year olds to ensure an age appropriate researched based curriculum
- Appropriate teacher-student ratios, and
- Teachers, Associate teachers and Program Administrator Qualifications

We support the creation of the Early Learning Council and recommend it be attached to a state agency for fiscal and administrative purposes only. We also understand your desire to include 3- and 4-year-olds in this bill. However, I must point out that the current Hawaii Preschool Content Standards only address 4-year-olds. We do have early learning guidelines for birth to 3-year-olds. We also note that the task force did not have the opportunity to develop the opportunity for birth to 3-year-olds yet, and we recommend we be given more time to develop this important part of the quality early learning system. Further, the Hawaii Preschool Content Standards is just one aspect of quality, as it only addresses curriculum. It does not guide or encourage improvement of the overall program. Therefore, it is extremely important that this quality early learning program also focus on helping our programs achieve the high and necessary standards outlined in our report.

## **Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force**

Currently, there are 389 programs serving 4-year-olds in our state, with 96 of them accredited. Additionally, 150 of these programs are engaged in voluntary quality improvement through the Hawaii Early Childhood Accreditation Project, a private program of HAEYC. It is the task force's and HAEYC's goal to provide high quality early learning opportunities to all children, and thus adoption of the principles of Keiki First are both a necessity and reality.

Moreover, we must not forget about helping our teachers, associate teachers, and directors obtain their college degrees and early childhood education courses. These educators are critical to successful education of our young children. They are operating where the "rubber meets the road"—directly with our young children--and we must support their professional development journeys. Our children need and deserve the best.

In closing, we support many of the details contained in this bill regarding the early learning system, and we will be glad to help the committee with this bill so that it will have the far-reaching and permanent impact for all of Hawai'i's young children and families.

**Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force**

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

LATE TESTIMONY

From: Bob Peters  
Co-Chair, Early Learning Educational Task Force (Act 259)

Date: Saturday, January 27, 2008  
9:00 a.m., Room 309

**Subject: HB2973, Relating to Early Learning**

**The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force strongly supports the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.**

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the House Committee on Education. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB2973. I am Bob Peters, Co-Chair along with Kathy Murphy, of the Co-Chairs of the Early Learning Educational Task Force. As many of you know, I am also the Headmaster of Hanahau`oli School for the last 26 years, and I strongly believe in the power and importance of quality education for all children.

Our task force conducted a rigorous study over the last 18 months to develop a quality early learning system for Hawai`i's 4-year-olds and to determine its costs, which culminated in our final report to the Legislature. An extensive number of volunteer hours were devoted to obtaining reliable data, researching and evaluating the efforts of other states and learning about the connections among the various agencies and institutions involved in delivering early learning services to Hawaii's children.

The task force supports the creation of the Early Learning Council, and we recommend it be attached to a state agency or perhaps a shared responsibility of two agencies for fiscal and administrative purposes only. I believe that including 3- and 4-year-olds in this early learning system is an admirable goal since it ensures that we won't stop with a program for 4-year-olds alone. Yet we must be wary that we do not dilute services to 4-year-olds and that we are capable of delivering quality to 3-year-olds at the same time. Additionally, as we rightfully focus initially on our at-risk children, I recommend we include these children in heterogeneous educational settings with non at-risk children. Research has shown that doing so truly facilitates learning for at-risk children and maximizes their educational potential.

Further, our Task Force is united in our commitment to provide quality early learning opportunities to all children over the course of our 10-year proposed schedule. We must not lose sight of our middle-income, gap-group children, whose families do not qualify for early education subsidies and who cannot afford the cost of quality early education. Our plan ramps up over 10 years to include these gap-group children and all children.

## Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force

We also note that our Task Force recommends that parents who have the ability to pay also share in the cost of quality early learning. While recognizing that the majority of funding will be public monies, we do anticipate that private resources will also support the program.

Majority of the cost of the program will be directed at servicing children in these quality early learning environments. However, the first few years' focus on workforce development is critical to this program's long-term success, as well-educated and trained teachers are required if quality learning experiences are to be provided for Hawaii's keiki.

Finally, we support many of the details contained in this bill regarding the early learning system, and we offer our help to the committee to further develop this bill into one that will have far-reaching impact on all of Hawai'i's young children and families for years to come. Attached is the bill with my comments for your review and consideration.

Thank you for your support of Keiki First.

Attachment:

HB2973 with Comments

**Report Title:**

*Early Learning Council; Keiki First Steps Program*

**Description:**

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE, 2008  
STATE OF HAWAII

**H.B. NO.** 2973

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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

*RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING.*

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

PART I

PURPOSE

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's children, starting at birth, need support and guidance from parents, caregivers, and teachers to reach their full potential as citizens. As a report released in 2007 by the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, *The Science of Early Childhood Development, Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do*, so aptly states:

*"The future of any society depends on its ability to foster the health and well-being of the next generation. Stated simply, today's children will*

become tomorrow's citizens, workers, and parents. When we invest wisely in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of productivity and responsible citizenship. When we fail to provide our children with what they need to build a strong foundation for healthy and productive lives, we put our future prosperity and security at risk."

Yet, many of Hawaii's children lack the fundamental skills they should have when they enter kindergarten, a problem for which our state, let alone society as a whole, cannot afford a delayed response. From *Neurons to Neighborhoods*, a report developed by a committee of seventeen national experts in the fields of education, psychiatry, neuroscience, economics, and public policy, found that

"striking disparities in what children know and can do are evident well before they enter kindergarten.

These differences are strongly associated with social and economic circumstances, and they are predictive of subsequent academic performance".

Research has confirmed that a large gap exists between the academic abilities of high- and low-income children by age six: the latter "lag further behind in acquiring more sophisticated reading and math

*knowledge and skills such as recognizing words by sight or solving simple addition and subtraction problems" (National Child Care Association, 2002).*

The gap can be closed by building an early learning system for Hawaii. Decades of research have determined that investments in high-quality early learning systems, grounded on the collective involvement of parents, caregivers, and teachers, produce significant, long-term benefits for all children. These benefits include improved school success, reduced dropout rates, reduced crime, and increased workforce preparedness and productivity.

Thirty-six states now offer some type of publicly-funded preschool program. Two states, Oklahoma and Georgia, offer universal preschool programs for all four-year-olds statewide, and New York, Florida, and Illinois are in the process of establishing similar systems.

Hawaii is now one of the only states in the nation that lacks an early learning program, despite the fact that it was one of the leaders in providing universal access for kindergarten and providing in 2001 a definition for "school readiness", which acknowledged the joint responsibility of families, schools, and communities in preparing children for lifelong learning. However, it is not too late for Hawaii to

move forward, and Hawaii can benefit from the lessons learned and best practices developed across the rest of the country.

The legislature finds that the state needs a comprehensive early learning system that ensures a spectrum of quality early learning opportunities for young children from birth to age five. It is vital that the system be universally accessible and comprehensive, and provide high-quality education and services that are preschool content standards-based and require accountability, all the while maintaining sensitivity to family choice and cultural elements.

Deleted: continuum

Comment [MSOffice1]: Often implies free, public supported

In 2006, the twenty-third legislature passed Act 259, establishing the early learning educational task force, a diverse group of public and private stakeholders that was tasked with developing a five-year plan for such an early learning system. This Act takes into consideration the findings and recommendations of the task force.

The purpose of this Act is to help Hawaii's children reach their full potential by:

- (1) Creating the early learning council to govern the state's early learning system;
- (2) Establishing an early learning system; and
- (3) Establishing the keiki first steps program.

Comment [MSOffice2]: Recommend eliminating 'Steps' given confusion with programs already containing that name.

## PART II

### EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL



SECTION 2. (a) There is established an early learning council within the department of education for administrative purposes only. The council shall work toward fulfilling the vision of a universally-accessible, comprehensive, and high-quality early learning system that is sensitive to family choice and cultural elements, to benefit all children from birth to age five throughout the state, including:

- (1) Establishing policies and procedures governing its operations;
- (2) Developing a plan, with goals and objectives, for the early learning system, including the development, execution, and monitoring of a phased implementation plan;
- (2) Coordinating, improving, and expanding upon existing programs and services for children from birth to five years of age;
- (3) Establishing policies and procedures governing the inclusion and establishment of additional programs and services;
- (4) Developing and implementing methods of maximizing the involvement of parents, caregivers, and teachers in the early learning system;

**Comment [MSOffice3]:** Is the DOE set up to handle the program as outlined? Perhaps there is a role to play by DHS? Or a joint responsibility of both departments with segmented duties.

**Comment [MSOffice4]:** Meaning?

- (5) Providing for accountability within the early learning system to ensure improvement of programs and services and high-quality results;
- (6) Providing for the most effective and efficient allocation of fiscal resources within the early learning system;
- (7) Collecting, interpreting, and releasing data relating to early learning in the state; and
- (8) Promoting awareness of early learning opportunities to families and the general public.

(b) The early learning council shall include representation from both public and private organizations, and its membership shall reflect regional and cultural and ethnic diversity to ensure representation of the needs of all children in the state. The members of the early learning council shall consist of 15 members as follows:

- (1) One representative of the office of the governor;
- (2) The superintendent of education or the superintendent's designee;
- (3) The director of human services or the director's designee;
- (4) The director of health or the director's designee;
- (5) The president of the University of Hawaii or the president's designee;

**Comment [MSOffice5]:** Recommend membership reflect the representation of the Act 259 Task Force

- (6) One representative from a government agency to represent federal children's programs and services;
- (7) One member appointed by the president of the senate;
- (8) One member appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; and
- (9) Seven members appointed by the governor who represent interests in the early learning community, including:
  - (A) Child development, including maternal and child health;
  - (B) Child care and early learning programs and services;
  - (C) Children with special needs;
  - (D) Child advocacy, including parenting support;
  - (E) Business; and
  - (F) Labor.

(c) The early learning council shall select a chairperson by a majority vote of its members. A majority of the council shall constitute quorum to do business. The concurrence of a majority of all the members to which the council is entitled shall be necessary to make any action of the council valid.

(d) Members of the early learning council shall serve three-year terms; provided that half of these members, as determined by the council, shall be appointed to two-year terms to allow for staggered terms.

(e) The early learning council may adopt rules as necessary to effectuate the purposes of this part.

(f) All meetings of the early learning council shall be exempt from chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

(g) The early learning council shall submit to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session, a report regarding:

- (1) Its progress; and
- (2) The status of the early learning system in the state.

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$            or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 to support the operations of the early learning council, including supplies, personnel, and travel expenses.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of education for the purposes of this Act.

### PART III

#### EARLY LEARNING SYSTEM & KEIKI FIRST STEPS PROGRAM

SECTION 4. There is established an early learning system that shall ensure a spectrum of quality early learning opportunities for children from birth to age five throughout the state, to be developed and administered by the early learning council. The system;

Deleted: continuum

(1) Shall be universally accessible. In its first phases, the system shall focus on all three- and four-year old children in the state, giving priority to underserved or at-risk children. When complete, the system shall provide a seamless experience for children from birth to five years of age;

(2) Shall be a comprehensive system in which:

(a) All existing programs, whether publicly- or privately-run, which consist of a variety of early learning approaches, service deliveries, and settings, are coordinated;

Comment [MSOffice6]: What type of coordination is intended?

(b) Public and private resources are maximized; and

(c) The use of public facilities for either publicly- or privately-run early learning programs is maximized;

(3) Shall provide high-quality education with Hawaii preschool standards-based content curriculum, instructional approaches for accountability, an appropriate teacher-to-child ratio and an adequate number of well-qualified educators and administrators who are fairly compensated and have access to continuing professional development;

Deleted: ,

Deleted: and

and

- (4) Shall be sensitive to family choice and cultural elements.

Deleted: steps

SECTION 5. There is established the keiki first program, to be developed and administered by the early learning council as the first phase in the development of the state's early learning system. The program shall focus on the coordination, improvement, and expansion of existing programs and services within the early learning system for three- and four-year-old children in the state, with priority for underserved or at-risk children. The core components of the program shall be:

- (1) The identification of research-based and proven curricula and methods, and implementation of various means of improving existing curricula and methods, including:
  - (A) Research-based early learning program models for three- and four-year-old children;
  - (B) Research-based early learning program models for at-risk children from birth to three years of age;
  - (C) Ensuring that written program standards exist and are implemented in early learning programs;
  - (D) Developing incentives to enhance quality in child care and early learning programs; and

- (E) Developing an effective, comprehensive, and integrated system to provide training, technical assistance, and monitoring to ensure high quality services are provided in all early learning programs;
  - (2) Low staff-child ratio and group size in early learning settings;
  - (3) Parent and community engagement;
  - (4) Health and developmental screenings for children;
  - (5) Well-qualified and adequately-compensated staff, including:
    - (A) Ensuring more staff have opportunities to receive early childhood education degrees;
    - (B) Providing access to continuing professional development for all staff;
    - (C) Establishing a structure for standardized roles across the early learning system and for incentives such as awarding credentials to staff who have received certain levels of achievement; and
    - (D) Addressing the early learning labor market and working conditions to build a qualified, diverse, and stable early learning workforce;
- and

⌘   ⌘

(6) Child assessment and program and service evaluation to maintain and promote high quality in early learning programs and services, including:

- (A) Developing guidelines for developmental screening and ongoing assessment of individual children served by early learning programs to facilitate appropriate instruction and document progress;
- (B) Developing guidelines for the use of child and program data for programs to perform self-assessments to assist continuous efforts to improve the programs;
- (C) Developing an evaluation plan for programs and services; and
- (D) Sharing of data across programs and services to assist evaluation and planning.

SECTION 6. For the purposes of this part, "at-risk children" shall be defined as children who, because of their home and community environment, are subject to language, cultural, economic, and like disadvantages that cause them to have been determined through screening procedures to be at risk for academic failure.

SECTION 7. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$            or so much

⌘   ⌘



thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 for the keiki first steps program.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of education for the purposes of this Act.

PART IV

SECTION 8. <sup>8</sup>This<sup>7</sup> Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.

INTRODUCED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

INPEACE- Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture

TESTIMONY

HB 2973

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Education  
01-26-08 at 9:00 am in Conference Room 309

by  
Kanoë Nāone, Chief Executive Officer

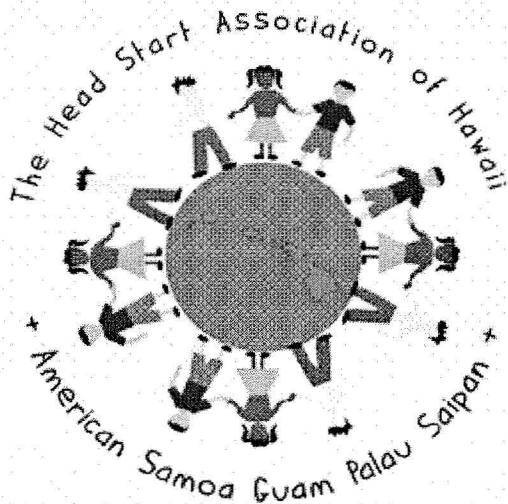
INPEACE **SUPPORTS** the overall intent of this bill.

85% of what a child will become in life is formed in the first 5 years of life, therefore early education is critical to the school success and ultimate success of a child. Intervention once a child starts in the K-12 system is too late for our most vulnerable of children. At INPEACE we know that for our communities the family plays a critical role in the success of a child. That is why our programs are designed to include the family. Our family child interaction programs support parents and caregivers in their role as the child's first teacher. Parents, grandparents and caregivers come with their children to our programs and learn about brain development, nutrition, literacy, and the overall development of their children so that they can then apply what they have learned to their child's life and extend what they learn during class time to the rest of the day. This is why we urge to be sure to include Family Child Interaction Learning programs as one of the settings for the Early Learning System in Hawai'i. Currently our programs operate on 3 islands (O'ahu, Moloka'i and Hawai'i) at 11 locations and serve more than 450 children and an almost equal number of parents annually. In all Native Hawaiian focused family child interaction learning programs more than 3,000 are served annually on O'ahu, Moloka'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and Hawai'i. At INPEACE we support an early learning system for Hawai'i that allows for parent choice, workforce development opportunities, a governance system that sits outside of current state agencies, is comprehensive & supports families.

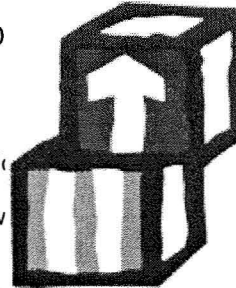
berg1-Liz

LATE TESTIMONY

**From:** FRANGER [FRANGER@cfs-hawaii.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 25, 2008 6:44 PM  
**To:** EDNtestimony  
**Cc:** David Tom; cmschroeder@gdoe.net; chrisj@hcapweb.org; debbi.amaral@meoinc.org; hsspnds@hawaii.rr.com; eokelly@fsswh.org; GAIL@MFSS.ORG; hs-ehsbnaki@pacthawaii.org; hspdirector@pticom.com; lynnc@hcapweb.org; milanetatinitali@yahoo.com; rmesebeluu@pcaa.org; hsdircd@hawaii.rr.com  
**Subject:** HS Letter to Legislature  
**Attachments:** image001.png; image003.png; image006.png



2970



1-25-08

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
 Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair  
 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Child  
 Haw  
 Family Support Services of  
 From: Frank Ranger MA  
 President, Head Start Association of  
 Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.  
 Maui Family Support Services  
**HB2973, Keiki First Program**

I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you and the Education Committee for your consideration of this legislation. As a member of the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task force sub-committee on Program Development, representing the seven (7) Head Start Programs in Hawaii; providing services to nearly 3200 low-income families and their children on six (6) of our islands, we encourage your support of this collaborative effort of Hawaii's early childhood community.

It is imperative that there be a continuing investment in our pre-school population providing these children, regardless of income, the great opportunity to gain the experience and learning skills that pre-school affords prior to their transition into the public school environment.

Your support is greatly appreciated. If I can be of any assistance in your deliberations please feel free to contact me, I remain a fellow advocate of Hawaii's pre-school children.

Mahalo  
 Frank Ranger MA

January 25, 2008

LATE TESTIMONY

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of H. B. 2973 creating an Early Learning Council to govern the proposed state of Hawai'i early learning system. H. B. 2973 includes establishment of an early learning system and the Keiki First Steps Program.

I have been in Early Childhood Education for twenty-five years. During those years I've been a home visitor for a parent and child education program, a teacher for a parent-child interaction program, a teacher for center-based preschools, an educational coordinator and adjunct faculty teaching early childhood education and care professionals. My experience and continuing education in the field of Human Development and Early Childhood Education has influenced my desire promote actions that will facilitate quality, accessible and affordable early childhood education experiences for children in Hawai'i.

H. B. 2973 describes important facets of a quality early learning system and includes elements that make it relevant to stakeholders, in particular young children & their families. It also supports functions that are integral to development and maintenance of quality, accessible and affordable early childhood education in Hawai'i.

I urge you to support H. B. 2973 for the good of Hawai'i's young children and the future of our Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Malia E. Newhouse  
BA Child Development  
MA Human Development, EC

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice-Chair  
House Committee on Education

LATE TESTIMONY

From: Phyllis Ida, M.Ed., Special Education Teacher  
45-284 Pahikaua Street  
Kaneohe, HI 96744, 235-6577

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

RE: Support of **HB2973**, "Relating to Early Learning"

My name is Phyllis Ida and I am in support of the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program. I am a special education teacher with more than 30 years of service to the children of Hawaii in which 5 years were in a private preschool and 26 years in the Department of Education. I have taught preschoolers, special needs preschoolers, kindergarten to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and special education students' kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I hold two masters degrees, one in early childhood education and the second in special education in early childhood and I have received my National Teacher's Certification in early childhood. Early childhood education is not only my career but also my passion to ensure quality education.

Every year I observe the lost of preschool teachers as well as assistant teachers due to their need to seek employment that provides a livable wage. As soon as private preschool and Head Start teachers earn their bachelor's degree, they leave preschool to work with the DOE, other teaching jobs, or jobs with higher pay. This leaves our current teacher resources severely lacking. To provide services to 4-year-olds, we will need to increase the number of qualified early childhood teachers as soon as possible. We will need incentives to increase our teacher workforce by providing scholarships and loan forgiveness. Our public universities will also need incentives to provide expanded access to early childhood education courses. Early childhood programs will need quality improvement funding to encourage program improvements leading to higher quality.

In summary, I am in support of HB2973. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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SERGEANT-AT-ARMS  
HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2973  
Relating to Early Learning  
Presented to the Committee on Education  
At the public hearing 9 a.m. Saturday, January 26, 2008  
Conference Room 309, Hawaii State Capitol

By David Rolf, president, Rolf Advertising,  
Member of the 1999 Governor's Task Force on Education Reform  
Member of the 1998 National Education Goals Panels Future of the Goals Task Force  
2004 Selection Committee (Judge) State Teacher of the Year program

Chair Takumi and members of the committee:

The focus of this proposal is well directed in that even the bill's title uses the word "learning."

It will take a Herculean effort to raise the level of learning of the three- and four-year old population.

Why?

The effort attempts to buck a nettlesome problem.

**The two-car garage phenomenon**

Early learning experts have long observed that children from higher socio-economic status homes possess higher levels of word learning – "the two-car garage phenomenon."

**It's all about the amount of talk going on**

In a painstaking study done by Betty Hart, Ph.D. and Todd R. Risley, published in their book *Meaningful Differences*, the two wanted to know why, despite best efforts in preschool programs to equalize opportunity, children from low-income homes remain well behind their more economically advantaged peers years later in school. Here is a summary of their research taken from a review of their work:

*Each month, for 2-1/2 years- the pair recorded one full hour of every word spoken at home between parent and child in 42 families, categorized as professional, working class, or welfare families. Between the professional and welfare parents, there was a difference of almost 300 words spoken per hour.*

*Extrapolating this verbal interaction to a year, a child in a professional family would hear 11 million words while a child in a welfare family would hear just 3 million.*

Testimony HB2973 by David H. Rolf, page 2

The operative word is "hear."

Early childhood programs must have millions of words read out loud to the children. Research has developed such outstanding curriculums involving powerful read aloud segments. These curriculums most benefit the at-risk students who have little home exposure to such powerful words.

Again, it's all about word-learning.

Hart and Risley conclude, "the most important aspect to evaluate in child care settings for very young children is the amount of talk actually going on, moment by moment, between children and their caregivers."

Children will have a better chance of succeeding in school and the workplace with stronger word skills – powerful word learning.

**Be more clear about the council's task**

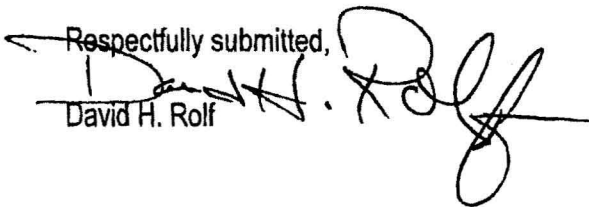
To avoid losing time, the House Education committee should set clear tasks for the early learning council. Otherwise long unnecessary discussions will ensue in their first series of meetings.

Usually a group like this will spend half a year deciding on a definition of "early learning."

In the coming weeks, as this bill is discussed, some amendments should make the tasking clear.

Respectfully submitted,

David H. Rolf

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David H. Rolf", is written over the typed name. The signature is stylized and cursive.

January 27, Saturday, 2008  
9:00 a.m., Room 309  
Hawaii State Capitol

LATE TESTIMONY

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Education

From: Shelley Ng, Vice President of Public Policy  
Board of Directors  
Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children (HawaiiAEYC)

Subject: House Bill 2973 – Relating to Early Learning

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the House Education Committee, mahalo nui for providing the opportunity to offer testimony regard HB 2973 this Saturday morning. <sup>-ing</sup>

My name is Shelley Ng. I live in Nu'uuanu, and work for Aloha United Way, an 89-year old charity that has raised millions of dollars since its establishment to improve community welfare by funding health and human services and working with other organizations on key social-economic issues.

Today, however, I represent the Hawai'i Association for the Young Children (HawaiiAEYC) as its vice president of public policy. HawaiiAEYC is a membership organization of approximately 950 early childhood professionals from across Hawai'i. Our mission is to promote, support, and expand quality and professionalism in early childhood programs and services for Hawaii's children (0-8) and their families.

The HawaiiAEYC board met last night and voted unanimously in favor of HB 2973. The board supports many of the details contained in HB 2973 regarding the early learning system. We offer our assistance to the committee with this bill, so that it will generate far-reaching and positive, life-long impacts for all of Hawaii's young children and families.



To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Education

From: Sandie Kelly  
Kula, Maui, HI

LATE TESTIMONY

Date: Saturday, January 27, 2008  
9:00 a.m., Room 309

Subject: HB 2973, Relating to Early Learning  
Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members  
of the House Committee on Education.

I'm in Honolulu as the Maui representative to the State Board of HAEXC. As a kindergarten teacher in Haiku, Maui, I'm happy to be able to testify on behalf of Early Learning. I'm on the front line of children entering the school system and see first hand the children that have not had the opportunity to be prepared to learn. These children begin with a handicap socially, emotionally and many times physically without the experience and activities Early Learning provides. This year nine of ~~21~~ 21 students came to my class with no prior learning experience. This bill would provide the quality early learning experiences children need to succeed in school.

To: Representative Roy Takumi, chair  
Representative Lyda Berg, Vice Chair  
House committee on education

From: Lisa Pakele

Date: Saturday, January 24, 2008  
9:00am, Room 309

Subject: HB2973, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg & members of the House Committee on Education. Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB2973. My name is Lisa Pakele. I am a parent of four children - 17, 15, 10 and a 4 year old. As a parent who had my children involved in a variety of early educational opportunities (FCILP, center based and informal childcare) before entering kindergarten, I understand and value the importance of providing parents "choices" for quality early learning experiences. Starting from birth, my four year old has the benefit of attending Kamehameha preschool but I know from working in this field there are MANY four year olds that do not have this opportunity.

**TO: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**FROM: Malia Lagaso  
Teacher, The Early School, Honolulu, HI  
Board Member, Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children**

**DATE: Saturday, 26 January 2008  
9:00a.m., Room 309**

**SUBJECT: HB2973, Related to Early Learning**

**Highly qualified and well-paid staff is one of the key ingredients to ensuring that young children have high-quality early care and education programs. Recognizing the detrimental effects of low wages and high staff turnover on quality care; children and families; and respect for early childhood educators in the field is crucial for our state at this time.**

**Good morning Representative Takumi; Representative Berg; and members of the House Committee on Education. My name is Malia Lagaso, and I am a toddler-team teacher in the Young Children's Program at The Early School here in Honolulu. While also a current Board member of the Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children, I stand before you personally today as an impassioned early educator giving voice to what we in my field have known for years as the fight for "Worthy Wages." I have been in the field for over 20 years in roles as varied as a work-study student assistant in the kindergarten at Punahou School; a teacher's assistant in a small preschool in suburban Boston; an infant-toddler teaching specialist in Seattle, Washington and Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and an educational consultant to child care center directors and staff in Atlanta's greater metropolitan area. I know firsthand the difference in the sense of life's worth between living on an hourly-wage without health benefits and living on a salary and benefits that materially reflect the importance of the work I do for and with children, their families, and my peers.**

**My professional and life experience has taught me that there is no joy greater than to come upon a vocation that one is not only skilled at and called to excellence in, but that one can be respected and comparably compensated for as well. Action must be taken to remedy the dissonance between a nation and state awakened to the importance of the first five years of our children's lives, clamoring for quality education, and the pittance of pay and benefits afforded early childhood educators, who have invested years of time and money, showing their commitment to the field by furthering their own educations.**

**In closing, I strongly support this bill, including points regarding ongoing professional development for and adequately compensating qualified early childhood staff. I also encourage this esteemed committee to enlist the wisdom of bodies like the Act 259 Task Force and the HAEYC to further hone the bill so that it may serve Hawai'i's children and families with the quality early education it so dearly needs and deserves.**

**Date of Hearing:** January 26, 2008  
**Time:** 9:00 A. M.  
**Committee:** House Education Committee  
Committee Meeting Room, 309  
**Agency Testifying:** None. Personal testimony of a parent of a preschool-aged child.  
**Title:** House Bill 2973

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

My name is Celia Chang Takahashi and I have been an early childhood professional for over 15 years. My professional experience ranges from working with young children as a summer fun leader, a first grade teacher, a preschool substitute teacher, a curriculum specialist, a program manager, and a professional development counselor.

However, it was not until I became a parent to my daughter Connor almost 4 years ago that ***I truly understood and appreciated how important quality care for young children is.***

I vividly remember, like it was yesterday. I had a new baby. Both sets of grandparents were unable to provide care for Connor. My husband, Nathan, and I could not afford to stay home with her. It was then we began our struggle to find care for our new born daughter.

Using the resource and referral services provided by PATCH I called almost **30 licensed family child care providers between downtown Honolulu and Makakilo. I was disheartened to learn that only two of them had openings for an infant.**

As I prepared to visit the two providers I read through the materials that PATCH and the Department of Human Services (DHS) provide parents regarding choosing child care. Both hinted at the same thing: **a license does not guarantee quality.** As educational professionals, Nathan and I knew what we considered quality care for Connor: someone who would love her and take care of her like she was a member of their own family. An individual who would talk to her, play with her, read to her and crawl with her on the floor. With hope in our heart, we set off to visit these two providers.

Unfortunately, both providers lacked that sense of 'ohana that we were hoping for. To this day, almost 4 years later, I remember how one provider exemplified the DHS and PATCH warning regarding licensing not equating with quality.

I was shocked by what I saw and what I was told. She did not acknowledge Connor the entire hour we were there. During our visit I saw bottles of milk and pieces of baby carrots lying on the floor, clearly a choking hazard for the two infants that were crawling around. No effort was made to pick these hazards up.

The provider talked gruffly to a child when explaining why he could not drink from his sippy cup- there seemed to be no love or empathy in her voice. And I distinctly remember the stale stench of cigarette smoke in the sofa cushions and drapes, even though she told me that no one in her house smokes. After Nathan and I asked the provider the recommended questions provided by DHS and PATCH she looked at us and said, "Why are you asking me all of these questions. I am licensed and that should be good enough. If you ask other people all these questions, they are never going to pick you."

As Nathan and I left the house, I clung to Connor and was about to burst into tears of pain and frustration. I thought, "A provider pick me. As the 'consumer', shouldn't it be the other way around?" However, she knew that child care vacancies were far and few between, thereby creating a shift in the pendulum: providers could pick which parents they want to work with.

Luckily Nathan's cousin referred us to her provider, a friend of her family. Our visit with Aunty Trudy, a licensed exempt provider, was very different.

Her house was nice, neat, safe and organized. She greeted Connor and invited all of us into her house. She asked us if it would be okay for her to sit and play with Connor. And when Connor went into her arms she smiled. Aunty Trudy then took us for a walk through her yard, where she asked Connor if she knew what kind of flowers were in her garden. After waiting for a response, she told her about all the different flowers and their colors. Even though Connor was only 6 months old and could not talk, we appreciated the fact that she knew that in order for a child to learn language, she needed to hear language. At the end of the visit Nathan and I talked about how we felt. Nathan told me that he felt confident about leaving our precious baby with Aunty Trudy because she felt like family. I shared with Nathan that I felt I could go to my office and concentrate on my work because I knew Connor would be in a safe and loving environment. When I turned around and looked at Connor, she had a smile on her face. I remember feeling like I won the lottery.

While in Aunty Trudy's care, Connor has blossomed into a confident three year old who loves to read, write, explore, create massive construction projects, talk story and "know why." However, no matter how happy she was being at Aunty Trudy's, Nathan and I knew that we had to enter into another parental rite of passage: preschool.

We always knew that we wanted Connor to go to preschool as children with quality early learning experiences enter kindergarten better prepared. We also knew that we wanted Connor to attend a preschool that was NAEYC accredited because they not only met, but exceeded the DHS's licensing requirements. However, there were not many NAEYC accredited programs to choose from in our area, and with preschools costing anywhere from \$500 to \$900 a month, Nathan and I wondered if we could afford preschool. It was beginning to look like a luxury. Yes. Our child's education a luxury.



We were pleased to discover that Kamehameha Schools has 30+ preschools statewide, many of which are accredited by NAEYC. Since Nathan works in Waianae and we live in the "district" lines for the Waianae Coast preschools, we decided to see if Connor could get a slot for their three-year-old program at Pu'ukahea.

Nathan and I **gambled** and were once again lucky. We not only won the "lottery" for a spot in the preschool program, but the extended day program, which is an additional cost, as well. Everyday I am thankful that we were got into both the preschool and extended day programs, because paying \$500 to \$900 in tuition a month would have been difficult for us.

The 2000 census indicated that there were 31,035 infants and toddlers in Hawaii. PATCH reported that there are only 947 spaces available to take care of these children. **Finding care, which may or may not be quality, is like playing the lottery.** You may find a winner. You may not. You may get a slot. You may not.

Finding quality early care and education for your young child should **not be a gamble.** **All** parents should have the ability to choose from different quality programs that they can afford.

If passed, House Bill 2973 would allow parents to choose from a variety of quality programs such as family child care, family child interaction learning programs, or preschools. Programs would be offered to make quality care more affordable and less of a gamble. Early childhood professionals would be provided with opportunities to get the child development and training they need to ensure that the young children in their care are safe, healthy and ready to succeed.

It is time for **all** of us, parents, early childhood professional and elected officials, to get behind, support and put keiki first. The time is right. The time is now. We cannot afford to wait any longer.

In conclusion, I strongly support the intent of this bill which is to establish a quality early learning program for Hawaii's keiki. In the best interest of our state, it is time to put Keiki First!

LATE TESTIMONY

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyld Berg, Vice Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

From: Jerri-Lynn Walters  
Single working mother and ECE Student.

Date: Saturday, January 27, 2008  
9:00 am, room 309

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg and members of the House Committee on Education. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB2973. My name is Jerri-Lynn Walters and I am the Kauai Representative for the HAEC, State Board. I also am employed by Tutu and Me Traveling Preschool, am a ECE<sup>student</sup> and a mother of a 6 yr. old.

When my daughter was 3 years old, I was able to put her in one of the 96 accredited preschools in the State of Hawaii. She benefited greatly from this high quality education and excelled in Kindergarten, regardless of the fact that she entered public school as a 4 year old. Being a single working mother, I could not afford the cost of her education. I am very grateful to have received Child Care Connection's tuition assistance, because I am a Early Childhood Educator that cannot afford Early Childhood Education for my own child,

and I'm not the only one. In addition to working two jobs, I am also a college student in Early Childhood Education. I feel it is important to have a high quality education as a teacher, so I can give the children the same in return. My hope is to get the compensation that it takes to support my family without having to take a second job to supplement my wages. If we truly believe in quality education for young children, we need to acknowledge that our programs are only as good as the teachers working in them. Everyday, talented teachers leave our field because they simply can't afford to stay in it.

As a mother and a dedicated Early Childhood Professional, I support HB2973 so we can provide well qualified educators and administrators who are fairly compensated and have access to continuing professional development.

Thank You for your time.



**Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force**

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

LATE TESTIMONY

From: Katy Chen  
Executive Director, PATCH – People Attentive to Children

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

**Subject: HB2973, Relating to Early Learning**

**The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force strongly supports the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.**

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the House Committee on Education. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB2973. I am Katy Chen, Executive Director of PATCH and a member of the Early Learning Educational Task Force. PATCH is Hawaii's only statewide child care resource and referral agency and a member of the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral agencies. PATCH receives more than 10,000 enquiries a year from parents and guardians looking for referrals for affordable, quality care of their young children. PATCH also provides professional development opportunities for those working in the field of early childhood education and care.

Our task force worked very hard over the last year and a half to develop a quality early learning for Hawaii's 4 year olds in both home-based and center-based settings. We understand the desire to include 3-year-olds in this first phase of the early learning system. However, the Task Force had initially focused its efforts on providing a quality system for only 4-year-olds, later adding birth to 3. We ask that the Committee allow for the additional work required for the development of a 3-year-old program before it is incorporated in the first phase of the early learning system.

Moreover, our Task Force is united in wanting to offer a quality early learning system to all children, birth through 5. Particularly though, the system must include the growing number of middle-income gap group families. Studies show that after housing, child care for young children is the second highest expense for families. Gap group families do not qualify for early education subsidies, but cannot afford the cost of existing quality early education. Ultimately they go without and this problem is only growing. Even for low-income families, there is not enough capacity to meet demand with long-waiting lists.

Although there have been some recent gains in increasing capacity, the need still far outweighs the demand. In follow-up calls to parents and guardians who used our services to find care last year, 60% of them reported that they were unable to find any type of licensed, regulated care due to a lack of available spaces. We know these parents often

## Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force

have no choice but to put their children in care that is not properly regulated and thus of unknown quality. It may not even meet very basic health and safety standards.

This very problem highlights that we must increase our investment if we are to accommodate the growing demand for early education and care. We do not have enough facilities to meet the need, whether it is a home-based or center-based setting. Nor do we have enough qualified teachers and caregivers for the future – in fact, we do not even have enough qualified educators to staff existing preschools. To meet the 80% access goal of providing quality early learning to just our 4-year-olds, we estimate we will need to double our early childhood educator workforce immediately. Factor in the desire to support staff for 3-year-old programs and the need becomes even greater.

The Keiki First Program described in our task force report addresses the point of increasing access while simultaneously improving quality. It will provide for educational opportunities from community based training to university sponsored degrees, so that a new workforce will obtain the necessary credentials outlined in the report.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and we offer our help to the Committee to refine this bill to best meet the needs of Hawaii's young children.

ST. JOSEPH PRESCHOOL



"Where children are special"

LATE TESTIMONY

Jan. 26, 2008

Dear House Education Committee,

The St. Joseph Preschool Accreditation Planning Board would like to express our support of the measure HB 2973 and backing of the Keiki First proposal. The St. Joseph Preschool in Makawao serves 37 families in the Up- Country Maui area. There has been a large demand for space and financial assistance at the program. We feel that by supporting the measure and plans proposed by the Keiki First task force will benefit the community at large by better serving our families and children.

We would like to thank the Education Committee and House members for their support and attention to this matter that can only be a step forward for the future of Hawaii's children. We ask that the members pass this measure and revisions presented by the Keiki First task force.

Sincerely,

The St. Joseph Accreditation Planning Board

Alicia Cordeiro (Director)  
Renette Koa (Teacher)  
Helen Souza (Teacher)  
Ronni Veirra (Teacher Assistant)  
Cathleen Bailey (Parent)



57 Dominican Lane, Makawao, Hi. 96768



LATE TESTIMONY

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

From: Wayne Watkins  
Director, University of Hawaii at Manoa Children's Center  
Board President, Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children

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

Subject: HB2973, Relating to Early Learning

As a life-long advocate for young children I strongly support the intent of this bill to create Early Learning Council and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg and members of the House Committee on Education thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB2973. I am Wayne Watkins, Director of the University of Hawaii at Manoa Children's Center and Board President of the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children. Today I am testifying from my position as a life-long advocate for young children and would like to speak to the portion of the bill that calls for high-quality education with standard-based content, curriculum, and instructional approaches for accountability and an adequate number of well-qualified educators and administrators who are fairly compensated and have access to continuing professional development.

I am one course away from a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education and for over 30 years I have worked with young children and the people that teach young children. As a classroom teacher for 15 years I was always the highest qualified person on the staff. Having a BA is not the norm in most preschool settings. I had always felt that level of skill; knowledge and competence of early childhood teachers would be higher if more of them had at least a BA degree. That supposition was confirmed for me three years ago when I assumed the position of director of the University of Hawaii at Manoa Children's Center. All the teachers at the center have at least a BA, some have Masters Degrees and their level of teaching and their dedication to teaching is so much higher than any I have ever seen in my career. These teachers are well qualified, fairly compensated and have access to continuing professional development and they know their stuff. They know and understand the myriad of ways that young children learn and how to provide for that learning. They know and understand the Hawaii Preschool Content Standards inside and out and are able to use those standards to inform their curriculum. They have the skills and knowledge to create classroom environments that respect the home culture and language of a diverse group of children while providing them appropriately challenging experiences that fully prepare them for whatever their future holds.