

Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Education and  
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing  
January 28, 2008

by

Linda K. Johnsrud

Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy, University of Hawai'i System

SB 2878 – Relating to Early Learning

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda, and members of the Senate Committee on Education, and Chair Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Ihara, and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing:

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 Senate Bill 2878, 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 Hawai'i'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 Senate Bill 2878, 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.

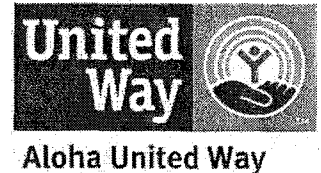
Four of our community colleges, Honolulu, Hawai'i, Kaua'i, and Maui Community College offer courses in early childhood education leading to an Associate of Science Degree. These programs are articulated with the Bachelor of Arts degree in the Social Sciences with a concentration in Early Childhood Education 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 SB 2878 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.

Aloha United Way

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January 25, 2008

**Senate Committee on Education**

Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair

Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Vice Chair

**Senate Committee on Human Services & Public Housing**

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair

Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Monday, January 28, 2008 at 1:15 P.M.

Conference Room 225

**SB 2878 – Strong Support**

Dear Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda, Chair Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Ihara and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way strongly encourages your favorable consideration of SB 2878 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 SB 2878.

Sincerely:



Susan Doyle  
President & Chief Professional Officer

**Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committees on Education & Human Services & Public Housing  
Conference Room 225**

**January 28, 2008 at 1:15pm**

**SB2878 - Relating to Early Learning**

**Chairs Sakamoto & Chun Oakland, and Members of the Committees on Education & Human Services & Public Housing:**

My name is Kathryn Matayoshi, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Business Roundtable. I am testifying in support of the intent of Senate Bill 2878, 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 SB2878 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.

Submitter: Kevin A. Roberts

Committee: Senate Education and Human Services and Public Housing Committees

Date/time of Hearing: January 28, 2008 1:15 pm Room 225

Measure Number: SB 2878

Aloha,

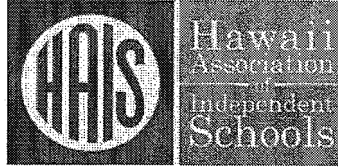
My name is Kevin Roberts and I am president and CEO of Castle Medical Center and a member of the Act 259 Early Childhood Learning Task Force. I participate on this task force as a representative from the Hawaii Business Roundtable, a networking organization of the largest businesses across Hawaii.

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



January 28, 2008  
1:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 225

TESTIMONY TO  
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SB2878 – Relating to Early Learning

Dear Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda, 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 SB 2878, 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.

This session we will strongly advocate for the allocation of \$10 million to mobilize the development of a comprehensive early learning system for children from birth to five years of age, beginning with the establishment of the Keiki First program, which, in its initial stages, will give priority to those children who are at-risk and underserved.

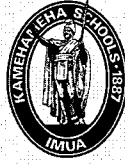
We also recognize that there is essential work that needs to get underway immediately to build capacity for an expanded early education teaching profession for Hawaii. Let's act now to support the growth and development of those already in the profession, and to recruit, train, and retain newcomers to the profession.

As an organization comprised of private educational institutions, HAIS strongly recommends that the structure created to support Hawaii's early education system reflect a council model, perhaps with membership along lines of the existing Task Force. In future discussions concerning the governance of such a system, we will also recommend that it be designed as a public/private partnership with authority and autonomy, while attached appropriately to an existing department of state government for administrative purposes. Such a public/private model would support and enhance the contributions of private providers, an essential component of existing early education programs in Hawaii.

In summary, our association believes the time is NOW to commit to a statewide comprehensive early learning system. We will encourage policy makers during this session to agree on a long-term vision for early education, to identify or create a dedicated funding source, and to define a structure for stewardship.

We believe that such a vision and an investment in early learning by the state will very positively impact the success of children in our elementary and secondary schools, and thereby support the goals of the state's P-20 collaborative to significantly increase the percentage of adults in Hawaii with four-year college degrees.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today and in the future as we work together on this urgent matter.



## KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Testimony to the Senate Committees on Education  
And Human Services and Public Housing  
Hearing Date: Monday, January 28, 2008  
1:15 p.m. – Conference Room 225

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

Saturday, January 26, 2008

Re: SB 2878 - Relating to Early Learning

Good afternoon Chairs Sakamoto, Chun Oakland, and Vice Chairs Tokuda, Ihara and members of the Education Committee and Human Services and Public Housing 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 SB 2878.

Kamehameha Schools applauds the legislature for its interest in establishing an early learning program and to 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.



## Personal Testimony

# L A T E

Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Education and  
Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

January 28, 2008, 1:15 pm, Room 225

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

### **SB 2878: Relating to Early Learning**

Chairs Sakamoto & Oakland, Vice Chairs Tokuda & Ihara, and Members of the Committees:

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 SB 2878, which creates the Early Learning Council to govern the state's early learning system and establishes an early learning system, Keiki First Steps Program.

SB 2878 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.

SB 2878 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 AMENDMENTS**

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. The College of Education, for example, offers Bachelor of Education and Master of Education degrees in early childhood education that prepare leaders in the field. 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.

INPEACE- Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture

TESTIMONY

SB 2878  
Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committees on Education, Human Services and Public Housing  
01-28-08 at 1:15 pm in Conference Room 225  
by  
Kanoë Nāone, Chief Executive Officer

L A T E

INPEACE **SUPPORTS** the overall intent of this bill which is to support the early childhood education in Hawai'i. 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, has sufficient governance, is comprehensive & supports families.

# UNITED FOR LEARNING

L A T E

## *The Hawai'i P-20 Initiative*

Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committees on Education and Human Services and Public Housing  
January 28, 2008 at 1:15 pm  
by Tammi Chun, Executive Director, Hawai'i P-20 Initiative, University of Hawai'i

### **SB 2878 - Relating to Early Learning Council; Keiki First Steps Program**

Chair Sakamoto, Chair Chun Oakland, Vice-Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Les Ihara, and Members of the Committees:

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 Senate Bill 2878, 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 the important foundation for any individual's progress through the learning pipeline. Toward that end, one of the P-20 Initiative's key projects is the "P-3 Initiative," funded by a \$10 million/8 year grant from the W.K.Kellogg Foundation. The initiative's goal is for every child in Hawai'i to read at grade level by third grade 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 and early literacy development for all keiki. Hawai'i has the opportunity to build a quality early childhood system in Hawaii, as laid out within the Act 259 Early Learning Task Force Report to the 2008 Legislature.

Furthermore, 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 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.