

Date of Hearing: February 26, 2008

Committee: Senate Ways & Means

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. 2878, S.D. 1, (SSCR2250), Relating to Early Learning

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

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) is in full support of S.B. 2878, S.D. 1. This bill will allow the work of the Early Learning Educational Task Force to continue, and ultimately ensure that the developmental and early learning needs of young children are equitably addressed throughout the state. The Department welcomes the opportunity to continue working with its early childhood partners, in both public and private settings, to ensure universal access to quality early learning opportunities. This initiative will allow state agencies to work more collaboratively to coordinate early childhood services throughout the state. Our collective efforts will help young children to be at optimal levels of readiness for learning, particularly as they make the transition into a K-12 learning system. As a comprehensive plan for early childhood education develops further and is integrated into other transformational

initiatives, such as the Hawaii P-20 Initiative, our State will be the beneficiary. Hawaii's graduation rate will improve, more high school graduates will pursue post-secondary education and careers which pay more than the minimum wage, and the number of citizens who are incarcerated or on government subsidies will decline.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 26, 2008 at 10:45 am

by

Linda Johnsrud

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

SB 2878, SD1 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

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, Senate Draft 1, 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 SB 2878, SD1, 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, SD1 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.



**Maui Economic
Opportunity, Inc.**

Est. 1985

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Wailuku, Hawai'i 96793
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To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Debbi Amaral, MEO Director of Early Childhood Services

Date: Tuesday, February 26, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I am respectfully submitting written testimony to ask the committee to pass SB2878 concerning Keiki First Steps. Research has shown a direct impact on early intervention, creating positive pathways that determine a child's educational future.

A task force comprised of respected early childhood professionals was tasked with the responsibility to develop a quality system. A plan was developed for four year old children with the intent to serve birth to three in future years. As a director of our Maui County Head Start program, I share in the concern of other community preschools in our challenge of finding and retaining quality staff that meet qualification requirements. In order for many preschools to increase salaries, they are faced with the difficult decision to increase tuition. This ongoing dilemma impacts staff and families as costs are involved for both parties. Support on behalf of workforce development and equitable compensation is vital to the overall proposed system.

I support the organization of a public-private Early Learning Council that is administratively attached to the state agency. I would like to respectfully request that representation from each county and each option available to families, including center-based, family child interaction learning, and family child care, be assigned to the Early Learning Council. This opportunity will afford the council to be represented in a comprehensive manner fulfilling all needs of the various diverse communities.

The Task Force recommended the sum of \$10.45 million as an initial investment to implement a quality system plan for the State of Hawai'i. This investment will directly impact the future of our keiki for generations to come. I sincerely thank you for taking time to review this request and respect your dedication in serving our children and families.

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Aloha United Way

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February 25, 2008

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
Tuesday, February 26, 2008, 10:45 a.m.
Conference Room 211

SB 2878, SD1 Relating to Early Learning – Written Testimony in Support

Dear Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and Members of the Committee:

Aloha United Way strongly encourages your favorable consideration of SB 2878, SD1 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, SD1.

Sincerely:



Susan Doyle
President & Chief Professional Officer



February 25, 2008

TO: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
The Honorable Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice-Chair
And Members
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Subject: SB 2878, Relating to Early Learning

Aloha:

On behalf of the Center on Disability Studies, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.

As an early childhood educator and a Board Member of the Good Beginnings Alliance, I know how important early learning opportunities are for children to enable them to be healthy and ready to continue learning when they get to school. Extensive research has documented the value of high-quality preschool education as an economic investment that pays off handsomely in lower special education rates, fewer high school dropouts, and fewer young people entering the juvenile justice system.

But the operative word is high quality. We must have well qualified teachers, with appropriate staff-child ratios, and safe environments for learning to take place. Highly qualified teachers are the pivot on which quality preschool education rests.

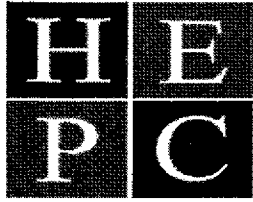
The real question is not, "how can we afford it," but instead, "how can we not afford it?" Our children, and ultimately our communities, our state, and our country will greatly benefit by adopting and funding Keiki First.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I commend you for your leadership in addressing this critical issue.

Sincerely,

/s/ *Jean Johnson*

Jean Johnson, DrPH
Associate Director



HAWAI'I EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER
Informing the Education Community

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

February 26, 2008, 10:45 am, Room 211
Written Testimony

by
Donald B. Young, Director
Hawai'i Educational Policy Center
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2878 SD1: Relating to Teachers

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and Members of the Committee:

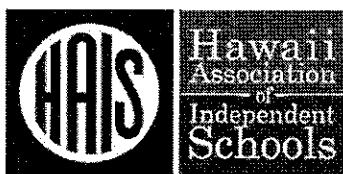
The Hawai'i Educational Policy Center supports SB 2878 S.D. 1, which creates the Early Learning Council to govern the state's early learning system and establishes an early learning system, Keiki First Steps Program.

SB 2878 SD 1 incorporates a number of recommendations from the Act 259 Task Force in which the University actively participated. The Task Force has also provided your committee with funding recommendations that have been well thought out and take into consideration both the need for an early learning system and the State's current ability to provide funding for it.

We 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 SD 1 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.

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



February 26, 2008
10:45 a.m.
Conference Room 211

TESTIMONY TO
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB2878 SD1 – Relating to Early Learning

Dear Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, 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 its 96 member schools.

We are in strong support of the proposals outlined in Senate Bill 2878, Senate Draft 1, 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 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 field of early education.

As an organization comprised of private educational institutions, H AIS 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 on this urgent matter.

OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

STATE OF HAWAII
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To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Paul T. Tsukiyama, Director

Date: February 26, 2008, 10:45 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 308

Re: Testimony on S.B. 2878, S.D. 1
Relating to Early Learning

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on H.B. 2878, S.D. 1.

The Office of Information Practices ("OIP") takes no position on the substance of this bill, which would, among other things, establish an Early Learning Council, but seeks clarification of the provision stating that

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

First, this only exempts the council's meetings from chapter 92; arguably the council members would still be required to, for instance, refrain from discussing council business with one another outside a meeting. Second, the Sunshine Law is only part I of chapter 92. Parts II through IV of chapter 92 relate to non-Sunshine Law issues, such as boards' general powers and quorum requirements, copy charges for public records, and publication of legal notices. If the intent of this provision is to exempt the council from the Sunshine Law, OIP recommends that the bill state that the council itself "shall be exempt from part I of chapter 92."

OIP would, however, recommend that this Committee carefully consider whether it is good policy to exempt the council from the Sunshine Law in light of the express policy and intent of the statute.

In a democracy, the people are vested with the ultimate decision-making power. Governmental agencies exist to aid the people in the formation and conduct of public policy. Opening up the governmental processes to public scrutiny and participation is the only viable and reasonable method of protecting the public's interest. Therefore, the legislature declares that it is the policy of this State that the formation and conduct of public policy - the discussions, deliberations, decisions, and actions of government agencies - shall be conducted as openly as possible.

Haw. Rev. Stat. §92-1 (1993).

The matters the council is charged with deciding are important to and will affect the public at large, and the public will in all likelihood want the kind of public scrutiny of and participation in the council's discussions and decisions that the Sunshine Law is intended to provide for government boards in general. In the absence of a compelling reason to exempt this particular board from the Sunshine Law, such an exemption is contrary to Hawaii's general policy of openness as expressed in the Sunshine Law.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

From: Linda Elento, Member of The Hawaii Down Syndrome Congress

To: COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Roz Baker, Chair
Senator Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair

Re: WAM February 26, 2008, 10:45pm, Room 211

SB2878, SD1 In Support of Intent
Relating to Early Learning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of the intent of HB2186.

Families of children born with Down syndrome need extra help from their communities to become their children's first teacher, to provide for health and medical needs, developmental and educational research and resources.

Questions:

Would Keiki First replace or include Open Doors tuition assistance program? Replace Healthy Start? Why was Junior Kindergarten started in the first place and is it working? Why or why not? How may children participate in part-time private programs, short-term sessions (such as the summer month before Kindergarten)? Could a cabinet-level early childhood office (deputy chief to report to DOH, DOE, DHS and DLIR (Head Start) achieve the early childhood goals and needs of our state, within a practical timeframe and cost?

In consideration of the time spent the past two or three years developing the early childhood plan, there still has been no studies, or policies implemented in order for the State of Hawaii to meet its obligations of the federal law Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and related state laws (Quality early education plan) to meet the developmental and educational needs of children with disabilities, including young children with Down syndrome.

Two reasons why Hawaii has severely limited the choices a parent may have for his/her child as to where special education services may be delivered as well as to participate in typical activities:

(1) With the expectation that Department of Education will provide what the child needs, not many other programs, public or private, accommodate for our children with disabilities.

(2) No matter what the State and public's perceptions are, the DOE makes the decision for the family.



The Department of Human Services does not make decisions for a child who is eligible for childcare and preschool financial assistance; the family chooses. Yet, how may a child with disabilities choose to participate when an aide is required for safety and/or health reasons? Typically, the program will not accept the child, or the family is required to provide an aide which is inherently inhibitive and costly. Result: no parent choice.

Our preschoolers with disabilities should not have to be subject to the DOE's decisions and services during this time of their lives when family choices, family and community involvement, and appropriate activities are the norm, not the exception.

Policies such as extending early intervention services to children who are eligible for preschool special education (not all children who received early intervention services up to age three, but only the children who subsequently are eligible for preschool special education). Children in particular who need this option include children who were born with very low birth weight, fetal alcohol syndrome, Down syndrome and autism. Act 259 (2007 session) Task Force did not report on research nor the needs of children and families for whom this change in federal law (2004) was made. Also, a policy to allow children to delay moving from the early intervention services to the preschool special education program until the next school semester begins. Other states continue services with the same providers, only the agency who pays that bill changes. Results: No family or child disruptions.

A change in policy to allow a child, to continue early intervention services a child, in lieu of special education preschool, to continue early intervention services could be accommodated by the State allowing: (1) the federal money that would be spent for the special education preschool child would follow that child to be spent on the continued early intervention services; (2) the Legislature could assure that state general funds that are being spent on special education preschool services would also "follow the child" to be spent on early intervention services instead; (3) the Department of Health could replicate the state-funded positions and programs (such as the Inclusion Project and Keiki Care Project) that currently serve preschoolers with disabilities and the community programs who enroll them

Our children and programs would also benefit from reversing the trend of related service providers (such as our one of our very best service providers Easter Seals) from quitting their positions and taking a job with the Department of Education.

Our preschoolers with disabilities require the DOE to act on family choices, to define the preschool special education's least restrictive environment to include home, and to allow for accommodations for children with disabilities in programs funded by the DHS and expansion of the Department of Health's Inclusion and Keiki Care Projects. INPEACE and the Department of Education's Families for REAL program (\$100K per site) are two programs that include parents and caregivers that, if funded, could expand immediately.

We appreciate your support for immediate policy changes, not just a lump-sum to begin another early learning council.

02-26-08 WAM 10:45a SB2878, SD1 Linda Elento, Hawaii Down Syndrome Congress

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

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

Date: Monday, February 25, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program.

Through Act 259 the 2007 Legislature asked the Early Learning Task Force to design and cost a system to provide effective quality education and care for all Hawaii's young children, beginning with 4-year-olds. The recommendations of the Task Force have the credibility of diverse and extensive stakeholder input, the advice of national experts, and the evidence available from the 40 other states that currently implement publicly funded early childhood education programs.

In addition to my strong support for creation of an Early Learning Council to oversee development of the Keiki First Steps Program, I urge you to remember that to a great extent the success of Keiki First Steps will stand on the shoulders of the early childhood educators who will teach these young children.

One of the strongest Early Learning Task Force recommendations is to support the development of a highly qualified workforce for early childhood programs. Research shows that not only are teachers with college degrees important predictors of successful outcomes for children, but on-going professional development to support staff as they do their vital work is also essential. As a college educator and an early childhood professional with more than 30 years experience, I have seen the difference that teachers can make when they not only know what to do, but why they are doing it. An investment in the workforce by increasing accessibility to higher education and on-going professional development will be returned many times over. Recognition of the importance of this work through compensation appropriate to qualifications and improved working conditions is also critical for the success of the proposed Keiki First Steps program.

Now is the time for Hawaii to make a commitment for the future of our children, our communities, and our state. The Task Force's recommended sum of \$10.45 million is an outstanding investment that will reap dividends for years to come. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the intent of SB 2878.

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Katy Chen
Executive Director, PATCH

Date: Monday, February 25, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, please let this letter indicate my strong support of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program. My name is Katy Chen and I am the Executive Director of PATCH – Hawaii’s only statewide child care resource and referral agency. We handle over 15,000 inquiries a year from parents looking for quality care for their children under age 5. We currently lack the availability and quality of early childhood education and care to meet the demand for the same. Accordingly, adoption of Keiki First Steps is critical in addressing this problem.

80 percent of current public school kindergarten classes do not have students displaying the necessary pre-literacy skills during their first month of kindergarten. Keiki First Steps will deal with this problem by offering quality early childhood education. Such education provides Hawaii’s keiki with the solid foundation for them to succeed in school and in life. It is a worthwhile investment.

4 out of 5 states in America already recognize the importance of early childhood education by having some type of publicly-funded early childhood education program. Hawaii can no longer wait and fall behind a majority of the country. The time is now for Hawaii to step up to the plate and adopt a statewide supported early childhood education system.

The Hawaii Legislature took the first steps to create such a system by passing Act 259 in 2006. The Act created a Task Force to develop a quality system, and the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force did in fact, complete that task. The Legislature must now follow through from its initial efforts and support the actual creation of the program outlined in Keiki First. The community needs investments in workforce development to ensure our children are being educated by highly-trained and degreed professionals.

All of us at PATCH want to increase access to top-quality programs and staff. We also support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council that is administratively attached to a state agency. This council will provide the required visionary and professional leadership for quality early learning to flourish and grow in Hawaii. Now is the time for Hawaii to make a commitment for the future of our children, our communities, and our state. The Task Force’s recommended sum of \$10.45 million is an outstanding investment that will reap dividends for years to come.

Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force

February 25, 2008

To: Ways and Means Committee, Sen. Roz Baker, Chair
From: Elaine Yamashita, yamash@hawaii.edu, 808-984-3208

I am writing to ask that the committee pass SB 2878SD1 concerning Keiki First. As you well know, high quality early childhood education makes a difference for young children, especially for children who come from challenging situations of poverty and instability.

The Act 259 Task Force created by the 2006 Legislature has examined many issues and gave the 2008 Legislature its 150+ page plan for four year olds (planning for birth to three year olds is next) and it shows that workforce development and equitable compensation for early childhood educators with higher qualifications is crucial to building and sustaining the proposed system. As the representative for the UH Community Colleges on the Task Force, I can tell you that my students are excited at the potential to be able to earn a decent living wage with increased qualifications. Of course, that can only happen with your support.

Because the early childhood arena is so complex, a governing/coordinating entity is crucial to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of state, federal, county and private investments and avoid duplication of services.

The Task Force is asking for \$10.45 million for this first year, which would be an initial investment into the proposed system. You probably know that \$1 invested into high quality programs results in as much as \$7 saved in social costs by the time the child is 18 (less special education services, higher high school graduation rates, less juvenile delinquency, etc.). You would be making a wise investment for Hawai'i's future.

IN SUPPORT

Providing Testimony for the Record

To Committee on Ways & Means, Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair, Senator Shan Tsuksui, and committee, regarding Hearing on Tuesday, February 26, 2008, 10:45 am.

From Patricia Urieff, Certified by the American Montessori Association, MSW, ACSW, Licensed Social Worker, with thirty years of experience working with children and their families.

Regarding SB 2878, SD1

Report Title:

Early Learning Council; Keiki First Steps Program; Appropriation

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. (SD1)

Findings over time show early brain development, optimal learning capacity from 0 to 5 years, and best outcomes as result of the child receiving early opportunities to experience appropriate supports. Some progress has been made to educate the public and in particular parents.

This bill appears to take steps to establish a Hawaii early learning system.

It's important that the early learning system embrace all parents, relatives, and people who provide care to infants and children. These people in all income brackets need more information and more access to opportunities for the children (in their care) to have early learning experiences.

Therefore, the priority of the early learning council should be to get information out to the general public - and not just to focus on reaching just the low income families because parents probably don't know about early brain development

For example, today's middle class parents are scrambling to hold down two or more jobs, they are very busy. Their children are at risk of not getting their early needs met.

testimony

From: Lilinoe Young [lilinoeyoung@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2008 12:29 PM
To: testimony
Subject: Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair

From: P. Lilinoe Keliipio-Young
Site Manager, INPEACE-SPARK

Date: Tuesday, February 26, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee:

I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program.

FACT: 85% of a keiki's development happens in the FIRST FIVE years of life.

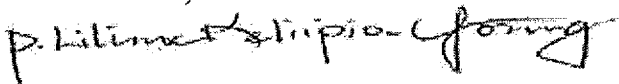
Quality early childhood education will provide Hawai'i's keiki with the solid foundation for them to succeed in school and in life.

One-third of children who begin kindergarten each year enter school behind; Hawai'i statistics indicate that an alarming number of keiki are as much as two years behind in their social and emotional development. Many never catch up. The reasons for this are complex, but clearly the multitude of systems-from family to schools to government-that should be supporting young children are failing to do so. With over 80 percent of our current public school kindergarten classes not having most of their students displaying the necessary pre-literacy skills during their first month of kindergarten, we need to make a stand now.

Act 259 seeks to develop a publicly-funded quality early childhood education system that includes investments in workforce development of highly-trained staff and ready access to top-quality programs. I also support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council to steer this system into the future.

NOW is the time for Hawai'i to make a commitment for the future of our keiki, our communities and our State. I urge you to support the passage of SB2878; the investment of \$10.45 million will reap continued benefits for Hawai'i as we support the early education of our future, the young keiki of our island State.

me ka mahalo,



2/25/2008

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Ka'ina Bonacorsi
Maui County Early Childhood Resource Coordinator

Date: Tuesday, February 26, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I am writing to ask that the committee pass SB2878 concerning Keiki First Steps Program. It is a well known fact that providing high quality early childhood education has a profound impact on their future successes.

The Act 259 tasked the Task Force to develop a quality system, and the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force's Report certainly did this with the plan for four year olds (and the intention to address birth to three next). As a community coordinator I am aware of the continuous struggles that many preschool directors or family child interaction program directors have in recruiting and retaining qualified staff to provide the quality education we are looking for. I am also aware of the costs associated with quality care and education and the impact that this will have if preschools and or programs pass this on to the families who are already struggling to invest in the success of their child's future. It is imperative that workforce development and equitable compensation for early childhood educators be factored in to support the proposed system.

I also support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council that is administratively attached to a state agency. A governing / coordinating body will play an important role in the efficacy of the program. I would like to encourage you to consider including representation from each county and each setting (center based, family child interaction learning, and family child care) on the Early Learning Council. Having such representation on the Task Force was essential in the process that was used to develop the plan and will be pertinent to the system building and sustainability of the early learning system.

The Task Force has recommended the sum of \$10.45 million as an initial investment into the proposed system. This is a wise investment in our states future, this investment will make a profound impact on our Keiki's future.

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Celia Chang Takahashi
Facilitator, Good Beginnings Oahu Council (GBOC)

Date: Tuesday, February 26, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, SD1, Relating to Early Learning

Aloha Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify in regards to Senate Bill 2878 SD1.

My name is Celia Chang Takahashi and I am the Oahu Coordinator with the Good Beginnings Alliance and the Facilitator of the Good Beginnings Oahu Council (GBOC) which is made up of individuals who provide direct services to young children and their families throughout the island of Oahu. At this time it is my honor to submit this testimony on behalf of GBOC.

GBOC would like to compliment the Legislature for their desire to establish a comprehensive Early Learning System that ensures a continuum of quality early learning opportunities for young children from birth to age five that is universally accessible and comprehensive, and maintains sensitivity to family choice and cultural elements through SB2878 SD1. Some of the major intents of the Bill, as currently written, include:

1. The establishment of an Early Learning Council that will work towards fulfilling the vision of a universally accessible, comprehensive and high-quality early learning system that is sensitive to family choice and cultural elements, includes a member who is appointed by the Governor who represents the interests in the early learning community from child care and early learning programs and services.
2. Developing and implementing methods of maximizing the involvement of parents, caregivers, and teachers in the early learning system.
3. Creating a comprehensive, coordinated Early Learning System that consists of a variety of early learning approaches, service deliveries, and settings, that are both publicly and privately run.

To help the Legislature achieve the above mentioned intents GBOC would like to recommend that the Legislature:

1. Expand the Early Learning Council to include representation of various early learning approaches, service deliveries, and settings including: center-based, family child care, and family-child interaction learning programs.
2. Expand the Council include members from urban and rural communities.

Rational

Currently the Early Learning Council, as designed by SB2878 SD1, is made up of 15 members, one of which is a representative of child care and early learning programs and services.

However, in order for the intent of SB2878 SD1 to be fully recognized, GBOC firmly believes that the Early Learning Council needs to be expanded to include representation of various early learning approaches, service deliveries, and settings including: center-based, family child care, and family-child interaction learning programs because each service provider setting has different clientele, implementation plans, goals, challenges, etc.

Having one individual representing all types of providers will not achieve the development and implementation of methods to maximize the involvement of parents, caregivers, and teachers in the early learning system as each setting type, and the families that access them, are very unique. Designing a “one size fits all” representation will fail not only the proposed Early Learning System, but Hawaii’s keiki.

SB2878 SD1 also states that it is vital that the system be universally accessible and comprehensive and maintain sensitivity to family choice and cultural elements. However the proposed membership roster is largely made up of individuals that represent State offices or programs that are “housed” in Honolulu.

In order for the Early Learning Council to truly have cultural and ethnic diversity, GBOC would like to recommend that the council be expanded to include members from urban and rural communities. GBOC firmly believes that the only way the Early Learning Council can effectively address the diverse regional, cultural and ethnic needs that makes up our great state is by giving equal representation to both rural and urban communities.

In conclusion, GBOC strongly encourages the Legislature to expand the Early Learning Council from the proposed 15 members to include members that represent

1. center-based;
2. family child care;
3. family-child interaction learning programs;
4. urban communities; and
5. rural communities.

GBOC firmly believes that these recommended additions are a good way for the Legislature to reach its goal of creating a comprehensive, cohesive, and sustainable early learning system that ensures a spectrum of quality early learning opportunities for all of Hawaii’s keiki. These recommendations are one of the best ways to put Keiki First!

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: David Tom

Date: Monday, February 25, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878 SD1, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program.

Nearly 2 years ago, I completed a 27.5-year career in the United States Air Force, and one of the hallmarks of both the Air Force and all the services has been their investment in quality early childhood education. In fact, the Department of Defense's early learning system is recognized as the finest in the nation and is a huge benefit for our military families. This was achieved through federal law and targeted funding investments

I have worked on the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force for the last 18 months, and the Task Force's report truly fulfills the mandate of Act 259. This early learning system will provide Hawaii's children with a bedrock foundation to succeed in school and in life. Less than 20% of our public school kindergarten classes display the necessary pre-literacy skills at the start of school, and I believe this is one of the major contributors to only 52% of our third graders reading at grade level in 2006. Educators know that a child learns to read from pre-kindergarten to the third grade, and reads to learn from the fourth grade onward. This quality early learning system for Hawaii will make a huge impact for our children's learning success.

The Department of Defense and 40 other states have recognized the need to invest in some type of publicly-funded quality early learning system, and Hawaii must make this next step forward now. It is really about not only our children, but our state's sustainability for the future.

Additionally, the early childhood workforce is an underpaid career path, and we must fund these professionals' workforce development through more distance learning and college financial aid. These professionals are what makes a quality early learning program, and they need our help.

I do support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council that is administratively attached to a state agency. This council must have the administrative and fiscal authority to oversee the early learning system, and I am very happy with the recognition of this needed governance body. Thank you for your consideration of this critical bill, SB2878 SD1. Hawaii will certainly benefit from this worthy investment.

Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

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

Date: Monday, February 25, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program.

I have been a preschool teacher, center director, and now am President of the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children. I wholeheartedly believe in quality early childhood education and have dedicated my entire adult life to this great profession. Our Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force has developed a high-quality early learning system for Hawai'i's 4-year-olds that will benefit all of Hawaii for years to come.

This bill will help to provide our young children with the solid building block for success in school and life. Studies throughout the nation have shown the definitive value of investing in quality early learning, with improved student learning and achievement, reduced K-12 special education, decreased high school drop outs, and a slew of other benefits to children and society as a whole. We are 1 of only 10 states without some type of publicly-funded early learning system, and we must act now.

Delivering a quality early learning system will depend especially on a highly trained and educated workforce, and we must also provide the distance learning and financial aid opportunities for our educational professionals to achieve the college degrees recommended by the Task Force. It is imperative that we deliver both increased access and quality for this early learning system.

We also support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council that is administratively attached to a state agency. This council must have the administrative and fiscal authority to oversee the early learning system, and we are very happy with the recognition of this needed governance body. We will also be glad to work with the Legislature to further refine the right composition of this Council.

Hawaii must make a definitive commitment for our future in 2008 by investing \$10.45 Million in 2008 to support direct services for 500 children, setting up the Early Learning Council, and funding workforce development. Hawaii will certainly benefit for many years from this significant investment.

February 25, 2008

To: Senate Ways and Means Committee
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair

From: Robert G. Peters, EdD
Early Childhood Task Force, co-chair

In Re: SB 2878, SD1

As you are well aware from current research, quality early learning experiences enhance school success. Children develop the needed literacy and social skills required for both school readiness and school success. Longitudinal studies indicate that communities as a whole benefit from quality early learning as more students graduate from high school, incarceration rates decline as do school remediation needs and the general population contributes more productively to their communities.

The efforts of the Act 259 Task Force, a rigorous study to determine costs for implementing a comprehensive program in Hawaii, have resulted in a well-documented report that indicates the time is now for us to launch a quality early learning system. Such a move is both an investment in today's young keiki and our state's future. While the economic and social benefits may not be immediately noted, the long-term improvement in the quality of life for our families will contribute to a sustainable future for Hawaii.

The Task Force argues strongly for the need to fund the building of a workforce, both from a capacity and quality professional development perspective. A governing council must be supported to establish policies guaranteeing quality and high levels of accountability. And, we need to begin to expand opportunities for our families to access and be able to afford quality early childhood learning for their children.

The State needs to make the commitment now. Our keiki cannot wait nor can their needs be superseded by any others. Investing in the first year at the sum of \$10.45 million will begin a quality, early learning system which promises to yield quality outcomes throughout our state.

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

FOR Senate Bill 2878 SD1

DATE: February 26 2008 10:45 A.M.

PLACE: Conference Room 211

COMMITTEE: Senate Ways and Means

Members of the Committee:

I am strongly in support of Senate Bill 2878 SD1 (Keiki First) and its intention to create an Early Learning Council and early learning system in the state of Hawaii. Such a system will enable families to access a range of quality early learning opportunities for their children. These learning opportunities are greatly needed in order to ensure that all our kids can enter kindergarten on an equal footing. Research shows that unless such early learning opportunities are provided, there will continue to be a gap between those who are "ready on Day One" and those who are not. It is a gap that is hard to close.

I have worked in the field of early childhood on Maui for over 30 years. During this time I have worked as a Head Start teacher, a DOE teacher, a teacher trainer, and a parent educator. I have served on the Good Beginnings Community Council – Maui since its inception when it was formed Under Act 77. As a result of this involvement, I have come to understand the issues surrounding early childhood education quite thoroughly, and I believe in the need for legislation such as this SB2878 to address them. A system that is firmly rooted in the public sector, while also incorporating the current existing private programs and services, is one that can effectively meet the needs of Hawaii's families.

Act 259 requested that a Task Force examine all the issues surrounding early education in our state and provide recommendations for bringing about needed changes through a system wide approach. The Task Force's Keiki First reflects the understanding they have of the issues and provides recommendations for policy change. I strongly want us as a state to commit to those recommendations. An important aspect of these recommendations is that of creating an Early Learning Council that reflects not only the ethnic and cultural diversity in our state, but also the geographical diversity. It is important that the neighbor islands be provided with a significant voice in the process. For this reason, I recommend that each county have such a voice through its existing County Coordinators, who are well versed in the early childhood needs in their counties and who can undertake necessary research and dialogue on the local level as the process evolves. To leave those local voices out would be to weaken the process from the very start.

Another important aspect of Keiki First is the urgent need for workforce development. Without concurrent growth in the workforce, our state will not be able to provide the quality early learning experiences so necessary to the state's continued growth. Keiki First recognizes what those needs are and lays out a plan for incremental growth in the workforce.

The State needs to make the necessary commitment of both funds and structure to enable such recommendations to become policy. While \$10.45 million seems an enormous sum to provide, it is only through such an investment that we can truly give our keiki their due.

Mahalo.

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Sandie Morimoto
Lead Coordinator/Community Counselor – INPEACE-Ka Lama Education Academy

Hearing: Monday, February 25, 2008 10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: Support of SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Aloha Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee,

INPEACE-Ka Lama Education Academy has been working in the Wai`anae Coast communities for nearly 10 years recruiting coast residents to become licensed teachers. Our main focus has been elementary schools, and we are currently also assisting students through lower undergraduate studies toward Early Childhood Education as well as Secondary Education degrees. The need for access to higher educational opportunities for current early childhood workers is high so that there will be adequate access to top quality pre-school programs. I strongly support SB2878 to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program.

Quality early childhood education will provide Hawaii's keiki with the solid foundation for them to succeed in school and in life. With over 80 percent of our current public school kindergarten classes not having most of their students displaying the necessary pre-literacy skills during their first month of kindergarten, we need to make a stand now. In fact, 40 other states already have some type of publicly-funded early childhood education program in their states, and it is time for Hawaii engage in this endeavor.

Act 259 tasked the Task Force to develop a quality system, and the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force's Report certainly did this. Additionally, we need investments in workforce development to ensure our children are being educated by highly-trained and degreed professionals. We want to increase access to top-quality programs and staff.

We also support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council that is administratively attached to a state agency. This council will provide the required visionary and professional leadership for quality early learning to flourish and grow in Hawaii.

The Task Force's recommended sum of \$10.45 million is an outstanding investment that will reap dividends for years to come.

Mahalo for your attention in this matter!
Sincerely,

Sandie Morimoto

Sandie Morimoto
Lead Coordinator/Community Counselor
INPEACE-Ka Lama Education Academy
86-088 Farrington Hwy, Ste 201
Wai`anae, HI 96792
808 696-8312

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Kevin A. Roberts
President and CEO, Castle Medical Center

Date: Monday, February 25, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program. I represent the Hawaii Business Roundtable and want you to know that the business community is committed to this bill.

Quality early childhood education will provide Hawaii's keiki with the solid foundation for them to succeed in school and in life. With over 80 percent of our current public school kindergarten classes not having most of their students displaying the necessary pre-literacy skills during their first month of kindergarten, we need to make a stand now. In fact, 40 other states already have some type of publicly-funded early childhood education program in their states, and the time is now for Hawaii to step up to the plate.

Act 259 tasked the Task Force to develop a quality system, and the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force's Report certainly did this. Additionally, we need investments in workforce development to ensure our children are being educated by the highly-trained and degreed professionals. We want to increase access for to top-quality programs and staff.

We also support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council that is administratively attached to a state agency. This council will provide the required visionary and professional leadership for quality early learning to flourish and grow in Hawaii.

Now is the time for Hawaii to make a commitment for the future of our children, our communities, and our state. The Task Force's recommended sum of \$10.45 million is an outstanding investment that will reap dividends for years to come.

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Carol Y. Suda
GBCC Council Member Maui County
Project Director for 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant for the King
Kekaulike Complex of Schools

Date: Monday, February 25, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program.

Quality early childhood education will provide Hawaii's keiki with the solid foundation for them to succeed in school and in life. With over 80 percent of our current public school kindergarten classes not having most of their students displaying the necessary pre-literacy skills during their first month of kindergarten, we need to make a stand now. Research shows that early childhood education makes a difference in a child's learning from the very beginning. We need to prepare our children before they enter kindergarten with all the skills necessary to make them successful. In fact, 40 other states already have some type of publicly-funded early childhood education program in their states, and the time is now for Hawaii to step up to the plate.

Act 259 tasked the Task Force to develop a quality system, and the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force's Report certainly did this. Additionally, we need investments in workforce development to ensure our children are being educated by the highly-trained and degreed professionals. We want to increase access for to top-quality programs and staff. And in order to do this we need to help in getting them trained for provide the top-quality programs that we want for our children.

We also support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council that is administratively attached to a state agency. This council will provide the required visionary and professional leadership for quality early learning to flourish and grow in Hawaii.

Now is the time for Hawaii to make a commitment for the future of our children, our communities, and our state. The Task Force's recommended sum of \$10.45 million is an outstanding investment that will reap dividends for years to come.

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Sandra Garcia
Child development Center Director
P.M.R.F Barking Sands

Date: Monday, February 25, 2008
10:20 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program.

It is time for Hawaii to have a comprehensive program that provides quality early childhood education for our keiki providing a solid foundation for them to succeed in school and in life. With over 80 percent of our current public school kindergarten classes not having most of their students displaying the necessary pre-literacy skills during their first month of kindergarten, we need to make a stand now. In fact, 40 other states already have some type of publicly-funded early childhood education program in their states, and the time is now for Hawaii to step up to the plate.

Act 259 tasked the Task Force to develop a quality system, and the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force's Report certainly did this. To provide a high quality program our educators need to be highly-trained, therefore we need investments in workforce development to ensure our children are being educated by degreed professionals.

We also support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council that is administratively attached to a state agency. This council will provide the required visionary and professional leadership for quality early learning to flourish and grow in Hawaii.

Now is the time for Hawaii to make a commitment for the future of our children, our communities, and our state. The Task Force's recommended sum of \$10.45 million is an outstanding investment that will reap dividends for years to come.

To: Rep Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Rep Marilyn L. Lee, Vice Chair
HOUSE FINANCE

From: Sandra Garcia
Child development Center Director
P.M.R.F Barking Sands

Date: Monday, February 25, 2008
10:20 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

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It is time for Hawaii to have a comprehensive program that provides quality early childhood education for our keiki providing a solid foundation for them to succeed in school and in life. With over 80 percent of our current public school kindergarten classes not having most of their students displaying the necessary pre-literacy skills during their first month of kindergarten, we need to make a stand now. In fact, 40 other states already have some type of publicly-funded early childhood education program in their states, and the time is now for Hawaii to step up to the plate.

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We also support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council that is administratively attached to a state agency. This council will provide the required visionary and professional leadership for quality early learning to flourish and grow in Hawaii.

Now is the time for Hawaii to make a commitment for the future of our children, our communities, and our state. The Task Force's recommended sum of \$10.45 million is an outstanding investment that will reap dividends for years to come.

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Rae DeCoito
COO- Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture

Date: Monday, February 25, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program.

Quality early childhood education will provide Hawaii's keiki with the solid foundation for them to succeed in school and in life. With over 80 percent of our current public school kindergarten classes not having most of their students displaying the necessary pre-literacy skills during their first month of kindergarten, we need to make a stand now. In fact, 40 other states already have some type of publicly-funded early childhood education program in their states, and the time is now for Hawaii to step up to the plate.

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We also support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council that is administratively attached to a state agency. This council will provide the required visionary and professional leadership for quality early learning to flourish and grow in Hawaii.

Now is the time for Hawaii to make a commitment for the future of our children, our communities, and our state. The Task Force's recommended sum of \$10.45 million is an outstanding investment that will reap dividends for years to come.

Rae L. DeCoito

Institute For Native Pacific Education and Culture

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Ed T. Yonamine
Associate Director, Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Tuesday, February 26, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program.

The education “pipeline” begins with quality early childhood education and creates a solid foundation for better school successes and opportunities in life. We need to take a stand now in order for us to turn the tide. Over 80 percent of our current public school kindergarten classes have most of its students not displaying the necessary pre-literacy skills during their first month of kindergarten. Hawaii must adopt some type of publicly-funded early childhood education program to change this outcome.

Act 259 tasked the Early Learning Educational Task Force to develop a quality system. Their report certainly did this. The Task Force also pointed out investments in workforce development to ensure our children are being educated by highly-trained and degreed professionals. To support these essential components (quality and trained workforce), the Task Force recommended a sum of \$10.45 million as a necessary investment that will reap dividends for years to come.

As a final point, GBA supports the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council that is administratively attached to a state agency. This council will provide system accountability, and visionary and professional leadership for a quality early learning system in Hawaii.

It is the time for Hawaii to make a commitment to our children’s future, to our families and communities, and to our state.

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Nalani Galariada
Oahu Partnership Coordinator, Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Tuesday, February 26, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program.

Over 80 percent of our current public school kindergarten classes have most of its students not displaying the necessary pre-literacy skills during their first month of kindergarten. As a coordinator working with vulnerable families with young children who may be homeless or isolated, I believe that a quality early childhood education program will provide Hawaii's keiki with a solid foundation for them to succeed in school and in life. A publicly-funded early childhood education program such as Keiki First Steps will help them but we must take a stand now.

Act 259 charged the Early Learning Educational Task Force to develop a quality system and the Task Force recommended \$10.45 million as the initial but necessary investment that can reap dividends for years to come for our vulnerable families. The Task Force also pointed out investments in workforce development to ensure our children are being educated by highly-trained and degreed professionals. All of our children deserve the best.

Finally, as a GBA staff member, I support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council. This council can ensure that our early learning system is accountable, and that visionary and professional leadership will help to grow our quality early learning system in Hawaii for all families and children.

We must make a commitment to Hawaii's children's, families and communities. We must take a stand for our state's future.

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Ed T. Yonamine
Associate Director, Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Monday, February 25, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

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It is the time for Hawaii to make a commitment to our children’s future, to our families and communities, and to our state.

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Nalani Galariada
Oahu Partnership Coordinator, Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Monday, February 25, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

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Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program.

Over 80 percent of our current public school kindergarten classes have most of its students not displaying the necessary pre-literacy skills during their first month of kindergarten. As a coordinator working with vulnerable families with young children who may be homeless or isolated, I believe that a quality early childhood education program will provide Hawaii's keiki with a solid foundation for them to succeed in school and in life. A publicly-funded early childhood education program such as Keiki First Steps will help them but we must take a stand now.

Act 259 charged the Early Learning Educational Task Force to develop a quality system and the Task Force recommended \$10.45 million as the initial but necessary investment that can reap dividends for years to come for our vulnerable families. The Task Force also pointed out investments in workforce development to ensure our children are being educated by highly-trained and degreed professionals. All of our children deserve the best.

Finally, as a GBA staff member, I support the creation of the public-private Early Learning Council. This council can ensure that our early learning system is accountable, and that visionary and professional leadership will help to grow our quality early learning system in Hawaii for all families and children.

We must make a commitment to Hawaii's children's, families and communities. We must take a stand for our state's future.

testimony

From: Melanie Padgett [goodbeginningsmaui@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2008 10:03 AM
To: testimony
Subject: In support of SB2878

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Melanie Padgett
Project Specialist Good Beginnings - Maui County
Date: Tuesday, February 26, 2008
10:45 a.m., Room 211

Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program.

As Good Beginnings - Maui County Project Specialist, I help to administer a Maui County child care subsidy intended to help families who don't qualify for other types of financial assistance, such as Child Care Connection or Headstart because they are slightly over income, pay the ever increasing cost of family home care or preschool for their children. The problem is that there are many more families in need of help than our small budget (\$37,500) can cover. Every day I get phone calls from concerned parents who want to provide their children with opportunities for early childhood education, but can't afford it, and I have to tell them that we have no more funds available. Another problem is that even if they have money to pay for it, parents can't find space in existing programs to enroll their children. There aren't enough qualified teachers and staff to meet the demand for quality early childhood education and care.

I believe that the intent of SB2878 to create an Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Program is definitely the right direction toward solving these problems. **Please also consider that it is important to ensure representation from the Outer Islands on this Council.**

Do not forget that money spent on early childhood education results in savings on social programs and the penal system later! Hawaii can afford this program if we truly care about our children.

Sincerely,
Melanie Padgett
242-1608

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testimony

From: Melanie Padgett [goodbeginningsmaui@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2008 9:50 AM
To: testimony
Subject: SB2878 testimony

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Melanie Padgett
Project Specialist Good Beginnings - Maui County
Date: Monday, February 25, 2008
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Sincerely,
Melanie Padgett
242-1608

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KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hearing Date: Tuesday, February 26, 2008
10:45 a.m. – Conference Room 211

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

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Re: SB 2878, SD1 - Relating to Early Learning

Good morning Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui 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, SD1.

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. *Now, however, it is critically important for you to advance 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 Hawaii's pre-kindergarten children.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



LILLIAN B. KOLLER
DIRECTOR

HENRY OLIVA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 26, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **S. B. 2878, S.D. 1 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 26, 2008; 10:45 a.m.
Conference Room 311, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of S.B. 2878, S.D. 1 is to create an Early Learning Council to govern the State's early learning system, establish an early learning system, and establish the Keiki First Steps program.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) cannot support this bill as written and would recommend that the Early Learning Council be established within the Department of Human Services or the Office of the Governor.

The Department was a key member of the Early Learning Educational Task Force (Task Force) created under Act 259 (SLH 2006) and played a crucial role in the proceedings of and development of recommendations by the Task Force. We are pleased to note that some of the recommendations made by the Task Force in a report submitted to the 2008 Legislature are incorporated in this bill.

DHS is committed to increasing the number and quality of formal early childhood education and childcare programs in which young children can participate in as these

programs have been shown to provide a strong foundation for learning as children move through the school system. Through this commitment, DHS has implemented a number of services to provide support to the current early learning structure that is in operation. These services include: ensuring the health and safety of young children through our childcare licensing program; offering subsidies to allow needy families to access preschool programs; providing training to childcare providers to increase their skills in working with young children; offering scholarships to early childhood professionals to increase their knowledge of best practices in working with children through college classes; the Learning to Grow Project which offers training to legally-exempt childcare providers to increase their skills in caring for children; providing appropriate nutrition information; providing a registry of early childhood professionals and for professional development; offering a waiver program to allow staff at preschools to be counted in the staff-employment sequence while in the process of obtaining the required credentials; providing a system for better trained health consultants for preschools to access; offering financial incentives to expand childcare capacity; and offering financial incentives to childcare providers who meet the content standards; and professional development standards so that there is continuous program improvement which results in better care for our young children.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.