

SB 1329

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY GEORGINA K. KAWAMURA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
STATE OF HAWAII
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 1329, S.D. 1

February 27, 2009

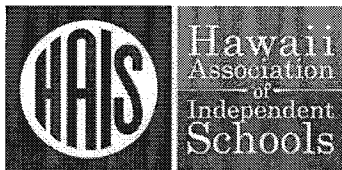
RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

Senate Bill No. 1329, S.D. 1, proposes that any unexpended moneys in the Early Learning Trust Fund under Chapter 302L shall not lapse to the general fund but shall remain in the Early Learning Trust Fund at the end of each fiscal year.

We oppose this bill because it will further reduce the amount of funds available for the State's general fund.

Although we support efforts to develop high-quality early learning opportunities, we note that the Department of Education has the authority to carry over up to 5% of any appropriation rather than lapsing unexpended funds at the end of a fiscal year. In Fiscal Year 2007 and Fiscal Year 2008, the Department of Education's general fund carryovers were over \$40 million each year. Normally, any unexpended amounts would have lapsed to the general fund.

In light of the current fiscal crisis, we cannot afford to reduce the State's general fund balance.



February 27, 2009
9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 211

TESTIMONY TO
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1329 SD1 – Relating to Early Learning

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

My name is Robert Witt and I am executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 97 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 30,000 students statewide.

The Association is in strong support of Senate Bill 1329, Senate Draft 1 – Relating to Early Learning, which clarifies provisions of the State’s early learning system regarding the membership of the Early Learning Council, changes the name of the Keiki First Steps Trust Fund to the Early Learning Trust Fund, and specifies that moneys in the fund shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year.

HAIS has long been an advocate for educational programming and services for young children and is in great support of both the Early Learning Council – of which the head of one of our member schools, Dr. Robert Peters of Hanahau’oli School, serves as chair – and its work to develop a comprehensive early childhood education system for Hawaii. We strongly urge the Committee to pass this measure, as it will provide the Council with the much-needed means to continue the good work that it has already begun.

We steadfastly believe that when investments are made in the education of the youngest members of our community – in this case, by allowing the moneys in the trust fund to remain available to the Early Learning Council after the end of the fiscal year – the returns are enormous. We are certain that an increase in the State’s overall investment in education will not only positively impact the future success of our keiki, but will produce significant dividends for all of us in Hawaii, for many years to come.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Keiki Funders

NETWORK OF HAWAII

Hearing date:
Friday, February
27, 2009, 9:00
a.m.
Senate Ways and
Means Committee
Room 211

To: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Alfred Castle, Executive Director, Treasurer
Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation

Date: Friday, February 27, 2009, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 211

Subject: **SB1329 SD1: Authorizes the Hawaii Council of Mayors to name designees for their two representatives on the early learning council; changes the name of the keiki first steps trust fund to the early learning council trust fund and specifies that moneys in the trust fund shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year.**

My name is Al Castle, and I serve as both the Co-Chair of the Keiki Funders Network, an alliance of private philanthropic foundations in Hawaii supporting quality early childhood education, and the Executive Director, Treasurer of the Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation. Keiki Funders Network and Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation strongly support SB1329 SD1.

Hawaii was among the first countries in the world to innovate in creating progressive kindergarten education for a multi-cultural, multi-racial population. As early as the 1890's, private funders, primarily women, were working collegially to privately fund kindergartens modeled on the progressive educational pedagogy of the American philosopher John Dewey and George H. Mead at the University of Chicago. By the time the Territorial Department of Education responded to community pressure to adopt the kindergartens and to provide a more comprehensive tax supported K-12 system in 1943, Hawaii's early education experiment had helped generations of our citizens to achieve admirable social and economic mobility. To accomplish this in the midst of the many challenges posed by World War II took bold leadership.

Today, Hawaii again faces significant challenges in taking the next step forward by establishing quality early childhood education for all of Hawaii's keiki with our current economic downturn. A growing number of economists and business leaders around the country have come to the conclusion that investment in quality early childhood education makes great economic sense. Hawaii's private foundations also wholeheartedly support this position too. Hawaii's philanthropic community contributed over \$35.7 million in 2007 and nearly \$38 million in 2008. This generosity is due also in large part to Kamehameha Schools, which has made early learning and parent engagement a priority of its education strategic plan, and provided the largest share of

these private contributions 89% in 2007 and 96% in 2008. While SB1329 will only apply to unencumbered funds, it is a step in the right direction. To ensure all of Hawaii's keiki receive access to quality early education, it will take substantial public and private support. Passing this bill is the right thing to do, as we believe all children deserve quality early education that meets their needs as they grow and develop.



Hearing date:
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27, 2009, 9:00
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Senate Ways and
Means Committee
Room 211

To: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

From: Elisabeth Chun, Executive Director
Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Friday, February 27, 2009, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 211

Subject: **SB1329 SD1: Authorizes the Governor and the Hawaii Council of Mayors to name designees for their representatives on the early learning council; changes the name of the keiki first steps trust fund to the early learning trust fund and specifies that moneys in the trust fund shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year.**

The Good Beginnings Alliance is a policy and advocacy organization focused on Hawaii's youngest children and their families. We strive to ensure a nurturing, safe and healthy development for all children from pre-birth to age eight. We believe all children deserve safe and supportive environments that meet their needs as they grow and develop.

We strongly support this bill with one recommended amendment.

Good Beginnings Alliance has been actively supporting the new Early Learning Council through its different subcommittees. We recognize the importance of continuing this work despite the current state budget challenges. We also support the ability of the Hawaii Council of Mayors to name alternate designees for their representatives so that the work of the Early Learning Council can continue in the absence of the representatives. Finally, we recommend that references to the lapsing of moneys in the early learning trust fund be changed as follows:

- From: "Specifying that **moneys in the early learning trust fund** shall not lapse to the credit of the general fund at the end of each fiscal year"
- To: "Any **general fund appropriations** designated for the State's early learning system under chapter 302L that are unexpended or unencumbered by the end of the fiscal period specified in the appropriating Act shall lapse into the fund."

Passage of this bill will allow the Early Learning Council to carry on its work during the next fiscal year. Mahalo for your support.

For more information contact: Good Beginnings Alliance; phone: 531-5502;
lchun@goodbeginnings.org

WRITTEN COMMENTS

Date of Decision Making: February 27, 2009

Committee: Senate Ways and Means

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. 1329, S.D. 1 (SSCR83) Relating to Early Learning

Purpose: Authorizes the Governor and the Hawaii Council of Mayors to name designees for their representatives on the early learning council; changes the name of the keiki first steps trust fund to the early learning trust fund; and specifies that moneys in the trust fund shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) is in full support of S.B. 1329, S.D. 1 (SSCR83). In view of the current fiscal situation this bill will allow the work of the Early Learning Council (Council) to continue, and ultimately ensure that the developmental and early learning needs of young children are equitably addressed throughout the state.

The Department thanks the previous Senate committee for the amendments made to the original bill; however, the language may still need clarification on the first provision as stated in Section 1 of the bill. The Council is asking that the all members of the council be allowed to designate an alternate, in the case that they

cannot attend a schedule meeting. The current language in the bill defers the naming of designees to the Hawaii Council of Mayors. An additional point of clarification on the fourth provision as stated in Section 1 of the bill. The Council is requesting that the unencumbered, unexpended funds in the current appropriation be allowed to lapse into the Early Learning Trust Fund at the end of the fiscal year.

The Department respectfully requests that the language in the bill be revised to reflect these two points.

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

As appropriate, the Department respectfully requests that this bill be expedited so that actions may ensure that unexpended and unencumbered funds are secured in the trust fund at the closing of the fiscal year in June.