



Thursday, February 4, 2010

8:45 a.m.

Conference Room 329

TESTIMONY TO
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

RE: HB 2976 – Relating to the Interdepartmental Council on Early childhood Education

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Brower 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 99 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 33,000 students statewide.

The Association supports the work of the new Early Learning Council (ELC), established by Act 14 in 2008. The thirteen member council includes many members of the Interdepartmental Council (IDC) along with representatives from the private sector and appointees of the Governor as laid out in the legislation. The ELC has been meeting over the past two years to design a comprehensive early learning system as charged by the legislation.

The ELC has been recognized through Act 14 as the **primary entity** in the State to address early learning policy, programs and coordination of efforts around a comprehensive system.

Given this situation and the need for the ELC's work to support the "Race to the Top" grant application, which we all believe is vital to our young children, we are recommending an amendment to this bill whereby the IDC would not sunset until the end of this year, 2010. This change in the current law will provide sufficient time for the ELC to cooperate with and support the IDC in its bid for federal funding through the ARRA program.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

TESTIMONY TO

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

RE: HB2976- Relating to the Interdepartmental Council on Early Childhood Education

Chair Mizuno and Vice-Chair Brower and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Robert Peters and I currently serve as the Chair of the Early Learning Council established by Act 14 in 2008. The thirteen member council includes many members of the Interdepartmental Council along with representatives from the private sector and appointees of the Governor as laid out in the legislation. The Council has been meeting over the past two years to design a comprehensive early learning system as charged by the legislation.

The full Council meets monthly and working groups convene in between those meetings and reflect broad community representation beyond the Council members. These groups are involved in designing the statewide framework of services, planning to increase/improve direct services through pilot projects, identifying quality improvement in a variety of settings, planning for professional development needs and seeking to access funding as well as create a public will in support of the critical nature of early learning in our State.

The ELC has been recognized through Act 14 as the primary entity in the State to address early learning policy, programs and coordination of efforts around a comprehensive system. The data being collected by its working groups is being used to currently support statewide efforts to secure grants including the P-20 longitudinal data, the DOE's "Race to the Top" application and an upcoming earmark being sought by GBA. Of critical relevance to this current bill is the fact that the data collected and planning initiatives of the ELC working groups will be essential if the IDC is to be successful in its application as the State Advisory Council to receive federal funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to improve early childhood education and care programs/services.

Given this situation and the need for the ELC's work to support the grant application, which we all believe is vital to our young children, we are recommending an amendment to this bill whereby the IDC would not sunset until the end of this year, 2010. This change in the current law will mean that there will be sufficient time for the ELC to cooperate with, and support the IDC in its bid for federal funding through the ARRA program.

brower1-Traci

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 02, 2010 3:15 PM
To: HUStestimony
Cc: threestars@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HB2976 on 2/4/2010 8:45:00 AM

Testimony for HUS 2/4/2010 8:45:00 AM HB2976

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Linda Elento
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone: 808-235-7610
E-mail: threestars@hawaii.rr.com
Submitted on: 2/2/2010

Comments:
Chair Mizuno:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opposition to HB2976 In the four years I have given testimony at the Legislature and in the past nine years I have experienced the DOH, DOE and the DHS since the birth of my son who also has Down syndrome, I have yet to come across a policy that places "inclusion" or a place where a child with disabilities may meaningfully participate in a setting with "typical" children, even if that means with "typical" children who are a couple of years younger.

The state's policies for young children with disabilities remain to keep these children apart from "typical" children. Here's one example, an administrative rule's eligibility criteria for the state's Open Doors preschool subsidy program:

HAR 17-798.2-14. (hawaii.gov)

(b) An eligible child shall meet the following requirements:

- (1) Must be four years old by December 31 of the year applying for the program for the ensuing school year, or
- (2) Must be three years old by December 31 of the year applying for the program for the ensuing school year, have a special populations referral, and not qualify full-time for the Department of Education (DOE) Special Education program.

If a 3 year old qualifies for special education but the family meets all other criteria, then the state is practicing discrimination against children with disabilities.

It's time for the state to re-do the way it depends on establishing policies that work and guide decisions. The Early Learning Council seemed to be another attempt to help our state to provide a quality early education, and the statute relating to "quality early education" then got repealed about a year later. We have 3 agencies (DOH, DHS and DOE) that separately serve young children with disabilities. Will our state ever successfully come together and allow these children the same options as "typically-developing" children?

Please do not extend the life of this organization within the statute.

LATE Testimony



Hearing date:
Thursday,
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House Human
Services
Committee,
Conference Room
329.

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
Representative Tom Brower, Vice Chair
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

From: Elisabeth Chun, Executive Director
Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Thursday, February 4, 2010
Conference Room 329

Subject: **HB2976:** Provides an unspecified date to extend the sunset of the interdepartmental council on early childhood education.

The Good Beginnings Alliance is a nonprofit 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.

Considering the following legislative and governor decisions, we support the intent of this bill to extend Act 77 and recommend the new expiration date be June 30, 2013.

In 2008, the Legislature passed Act 14, which created the State Early Learning Council (ELC) to develop and administer the state early learning system for all children, from birth until the time they enter kindergarten. In 2009, the Legislature passed Act 194, adding new members to the ELC to ensure its membership met the requirements for the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care mandated by the federal Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007.

The Head Start Act also requires each Governor to designate a State Advisory Council, and Governor Lingle designated the Interdepartmental Council created by Act 77 of 1997 to be Hawaii's State Advisory Council.

Since the establishment of the ELC, Good Beginnings Alliance has strongly supported this council with research, legislation tracking, and other things. Additionally, the Good Beginnings Executive Director serves as a co-chair of the ELC's Direct Services Subcommittee.

Good Beginnings also is the facilitator for the Interdepartmental Council (IDC), and we are committed to be the connection between the IDC and the ELC. We have also received a private grant to help the state draft an application for a \$500,000 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant to support the work of the State Advisory Council over the next three years. This ARRA grant application is due to the Department of Health and Human Services by August 1, 2010 and requires the Governor's signature. Thus, Good Beginnings Alliance will work closely with the IDC and ELC on this application, using much of the work developed by the ELC's subcommittees. To effectively serve in this capacity, Good Beginnings must continue our role established in Act 77 of 1997 as the private nonprofit corporation focal point for policy development and dedicated to enhancing, developing, and coordinating quality early childhood education and care services.

We recommend this bill be amended to add as follows:

- Add the following members to the IDC as required by the Head Start Act of 2007:
 - One member from an institution of higher education located in the State;
 - One member that is a local provider of early childhood education and development services;
 - One member from a Head Start provider agency located within the state; and
 - The state director of Head Start Collaboration.
- Establish a new sunset date of June 30, 2013. This will provide enough time for the IDC and ELC to work closely together for the creation of a comprehensive quality early learning system for Hawaii's young children and their families.

Mahalo for your support. For more information contact: Good Beginnings Alliance; Phone: 531-5502; lchun@goodbeginnings.org.



LATE
Testimony