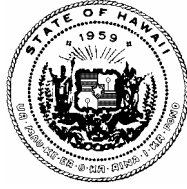


SB2121



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

February 3, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senate Committee on Education and Housing

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **S. B. 2121 - RELATING TO THE EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 3, 2010, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 225, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of S.B. 2121 is allow the Early Learning Council to conduct meetings by teleconference, and sets out quorum requirements and public notice and participation requirements for teleconference meetings.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: As a member of the Early Learning Council (ELC), the Department of Human Services supports this bill as it creates a more cost effective and accessible method to allow for participation in council meetings for council members as well as the public who are located on the Neighbor Islands.

The Department also strongly supports Administration-sponsored bill, S.B. 2710, Relating to Board Meetings, which would expand the ability of any board or commission to facilitate public meetings through available interactive conferencing technology.

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

Date: 02/03/2010

Committee: Senate Education and Housing

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Interim Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 2121 Relating to Early Learning Council

Purpose of Bill: Allows the early learning council to conduct meetings by teleconference.
Sets out quorum requirements and public notice and participation requirements for teleconference meetings.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) is in full support of this bill as written. The early learning council has members on neighbor islands and in areas that do not permit active, regular participation. This bill will promote inclusion and serve to ensure that all voices are heard. The Department is poised to assist the council in the appropriate implementation of the provisions in the bill, with respect to quorum, public notice and participation requirements.



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GOVERNOR

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CATHY L. TAKASE
ACTING DIRECTOR

To: Senate Committee on Education and Housing
From: Cathy L. Takase, Acting Director
Hearing: Wednesday, February 3, 2010, 1:15 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 225
Re: Testimony on S.B. 2121
Relating to the Early Learning Council

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on S.B. 2121.

OIP takes no position on this bill, which would allow the Early Learning Council to hold meetings by teleconference. However, OIP is testifying to explain the current state of the law regarding long-distance meetings and to recommend that a purpose clause be added to this bill explaining why this particular board's long-distance meetings should be held under a different scheme than applicable to other Sunshine Law boards.

The Sunshine Law already allows boards to hold long-distance meetings with appropriate protections for the public. Section 92-3.5, providing for videoconference meetings, was most recently amended in 2006 to allow a videoconference meeting to continue if the video connection goes down but the audio connection remains. At that time the legislature declined, however, to allow boards to meet purely by teleconference. In the present session, S.B. 2710, scheduled for hearing this Friday by the Committee on Economic Development and Technology, proposes to allow teleconference meetings for all boards and commissions.

This bill is specific to the Early Learning Council. If this Committee believes it is necessary to provide a different method of holding a long-distance meeting that applies only to

one board, OIP would suggest that this Committee amend the bill to add a purpose clause explaining why the Early Learning Council in particular is unable to effectively use the existing long-distance meeting provision applicable to all Sunshine Law boards.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Wednesday, February 3, 2010
1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 225

TESTIMONY TO
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING

RE: SB 2121 – Relating to the Early Learning Council

Dear Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Kidani, 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 is in **strong support of Senate Bill 2121** – Relating to the Early Learning Council, which allows the Early Learning Council to conduct meetings by teleconference, and sets out quorum requirements and public notice and participation requirements for teleconference meetings.

HAIS has worked collaboratively over the past few years with the leadership of the Senate Committee on Education to design, implement, and advance the work of the new Early Learning Council.

We understand there are presently some challenges related to the protocol for Early Learning Council meetings; this bill provides some specific remedies that will allow the Council to convene its meetings on a more cost effective basis, while simultaneously creating a more transparent and inclusive process for Council members for whom travel and time constraints make it difficult or impractical to attend meetings in person.

We strongly urge the Senate Committee on Education and Housing to pass this measure and, in so doing, increase the efficacy and efficiency of the work of the Council.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.



Hearing date:
Wednesday,
February 3,
2010, 1:15 p.m.
Senate Education
& Housing
Committee
Room 225

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & HOUSING

From: Elisabeth Chun, Executive Director
Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Wednesday, February 3, 2010, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 225

Subject: **SB2121:** Allows the early learning council to conduct meetings by teleconference. Sets out quorum requirements and public notice and participation requirements for teleconference meetings.

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.

We strongly support this bill. We have attended all of the Early Learning Council (ELC) meetings since the start in September 2008. Due to travel and work requirements, the participation of two members (Kaua'i County Representative and Family Child Care Provider Representative) have been noticeably infrequent. We are hopeful this bill will allow for full representation by all members of the ELC at monthly meetings.

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

Sincerely,

Elisabeth Chun
Executive Director