

**Date:** 03/21/2011

**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** SB 0289, SD2 (SSCR719) RELATING TO EDUCATION

**Purpose of Bill:** Appropriates funds for the Families for R.E.A.L. program and professional and curriculum development in parent involvement for DOE and the early learning council, Requires the program to develop a plan to cover a percentage of the program costs, beginning July 1, 2013. Requires a report to the legislature and governor by 2012. Effective 7/1/2050.

**Department's Position:** The Department of Education (Department) supports SB 289, SD 2 (SSCR 719) as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2011-2013. Parents play a critical role in preparing their children to enter school, which may have a significant impact on their children's future academic success. However, there are few programs available to equip and empower parents to raise their children effectively and prepare them for entry into academia. Funds provided would preserve the program, so that its resources, experience, institutional knowledge, and expertise gained over the program's 23 years of existence would be shared statewide through the increased focus on providing early childhood support. If funded, two program sites would serve as resource centers for both their communities and the entire state. They would continue to offer classes, but would also transition into an expanded role that would provide resources for training parents of young children and school personnel who work with parents of young children, as well as materials (e.g., newsletters, training materials,

videos) available to families statewide. Families for R.E.A.L. would serve as one of a limited number of resources available to assist parents in supporting their children's successful transition from early childhood into Hawaii's public schools.

The program is requesting \$300,000 each year to maintain its current sites. In addition to the requested funding, the program is exploring the securing of other sources of income, including adopting a sliding fee schedule for participants, seeking scholarships from early childhood/parenting education entities, and foundations. Developing a sliding fee schedule based on family income is being explored. However, there are concerns about setting a fixed percentage of costs to the program, as external sources of funding, including grants, private donations, and other sources, may vary from year to year.

The Twenty-Sixth Legislature, State of Hawaii  
Hawaii State House of Representatives  
House Committee on Education  
Testimony by  
Early Learning Council  
March 21, 2011  
S.B. 289 – Relating to Education

Chair Takumi and Committee Members:

The Early Learning Council (“ELC”) offers this testimony in support S.B. 289.

Established under Act 14, First Special Session 2008, the Early Learning Council is entrusted with the development and administration of the state’s early learning system. The ELC seeks to establish a cohesive, comprehensive, and sustainable early learning system that ensures a spectrum of quality early learning opportunities for young children from their prenatal period until the time they enter kindergarten. As such, the ELC focuses upon four essential areas: Early Education and Care; Health; Parent Education and Family Support; and Workforce and Professional Development.

S.B. 289, which funds the Families for R.E.A.L. program, which is a school-based teacher training and child development program of courses and activities for parents, relates directly to the ELC’s focus areas of Early Education and Care, and Parent Education and Family Support. Such a program represents a significant step in establishing a comprehensive array of services that will foster a bright future for Hawai‘i’s children. The Early Learning Council strongly supports this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Robert Peters  
Chair, Early Learning Council



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Rep. Roy Takumi, Chair  
Rep. Della Au Belatti, Vice-Chair  
Senate Education Committee  
Hawaii State Legislature 2011

Re. SB 289 S.D.2, Relating to Education

Dear Representatives Takumi, Belatti, and Esteemed Members of the House Education Committee:

The Hawaii AEYC (Association for the Education of Young Children) supports SB 289 S.D.2 to fund the Families for R.E.A.L. program's expansion into a greater statewide role and to develop a mix of government and private funding strategies for its sustained implementation. The funding cut to the program on the Neighbor Islands has been deeply felt by the families who were waiting to attend the program, as well as the staff.

Families for R.E.A.L. is the first "family-child interaction learning" program in the state. It provides another model for adult-child interaction and learning. Families for R.E.A.L. has demonstrated to be an effective parenting education and child interaction program for parents whose children will be transitioning into kindergarten.

As previous testimony from participants shows, the information, resources, and support that families experience is invaluable to them. It is also a cost-effective program, as a two-person staff can serve 270 families per year.

Families for R.E.A.L. provides a valuable piece of the family strengthening part of our early learning system, and more communities could benefit from its services to families with young children.

Please contact Kathy Murphy, executive director of Hawaii AEYC, or myself if you would like to discuss the positive impacts of program models such as Families for R.E.A.L. Kathy can be reached at 942-4709 or [kmurphy@hawaiihaeyc.org](mailto:kmurphy@hawaiihaeyc.org). I can be reached at 221-8629 or [shelleyng808@gmail.com](mailto:shelleyng808@gmail.com).

Hawaii AEYC is a non-profit organization and state affiliate to the National AEYC. Its mission is to promote, support, & expand quality & professionalism in early childhood programs and services for Hawaii's children (0-8) and their families. Hawaii AEYC has a membership of nearly 1,000 early childhood education professionals statewide and has active chapters for each Hawaiian county.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our testimony.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Shelley Ng  
Vice President  
Public Policy and Education

cc: Troy Jarrell, President  
Kathy Murphy, Executive Director

*Our mission is to promote, support, and expand quality and professionalism in early childhood programs and services for Hawai'i's young children (0-8) and their families.*