



Hawaii House Committee on Health
Subject: H.B. 2516
Making an Appropriation for Early Childhood Health

February 7, 2012

Good afternoon Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of the Committee. Thank you very much for the opportunity to **support the intent of H.B. 2516.**

I am David Thorp, director of government affairs for the American Beverage Association (ABA) in Washington, D.C. The American Beverage Association is the national trade association representing the non-alcoholic beverage industry. ABA represents hundreds of beverage producers, distributors, franchise companies and supporting businesses that employ more than 227,000 people across the country.

ABA members offer consumers myriad brands, flavors and packaging choices and a full range of drink options including soft drinks, diet soft drinks, ready-to-drink teas, bottled waters, water beverages, 100 percent juice, juice drinks, sports drinks and energy drinks.

Beverage Industry's Impact on Hawaii's Economy

The beverage industry is an important part of Hawaii's economy – and one of the few remaining industries still manufacturing on the Islands. Unlike most consumer products, many beverages are manufactured and distributed right here in Hawaii – by local workers.

Non-alcoholic beverage companies in Hawaii provide more than 1,000 good-paying jobs across the state and help to support many thousands more workers in restaurants, grocery stores and more that depend, in part, on beverage sales for their livelihood.

The Beverage Industry Supports a Comprehensive Review of the Obesity Problem

Obesity is a complex problem with no simple solution. Many factors contribute to obesity and related health problems. Making smart, educated decisions about diet and exercise make people healthier, not simplistic or symbolic solutions. If we want to get serious about obesity, we need to encourage a balanced diet with sensible consumption of all foods and beverages and promote more physical activity and exercise for all citizens.

The obesity crisis is a complex, national challenge that requires all us to re-examine old practices and find new solutions. All of us – policymakers, parents, educators, industries and community leaders – have a responsibility to do our part to help teach our children and all citizens how to have a healthy lifestyle.

However, singling out one particular product to lay disproportionate blame for the obesity problem is too simplistic and will not have a significant impact on a problem as complex as obesity.

The Beverage Industry Has Taken Bold Action to Do Its Part to Address Obesity

To effectively confront the multi-faceted obesity issue, it will require all of us to work together in our respective roles as leaders of industry, government and the health community. The beverage industry supports education and other solutions that work, like our national School Beverage Guidelines and new calorie labeling initiative, *Clear on Calories*.

- Cutting calories available from beverages in schools by 88 percent. Our companies removed full-calorie soft drinks from schools across America, replacing them with lower-calorie beverage choices.
- Placing new labels clearly listing calories on the front of its beverages.
- Producing fewer total beverage calories for the marketplace through the innovation of more zero- and low-calorie beverages. From 1998-2008, industry cut the total beverage calories it brought to market by 21 percent.

School Beverage Guidelines:

In 2006, the beverage industry teamed with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a joint initiative of the William J. Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association, to develop National School Beverage Guidelines. These guidelines, which have been fully implemented across America, remove full-calorie soft drinks from all schools and provide students with a broad range of lower-calorie, nutritious, smaller-portion beverage choices. There are now 88% fewer calories from all beverages in schools nationwide and a 95% reduction in full-calorie soft drinks (2004-2009).

Clear on Calories:

The beverage industry has also come together for its *Clear on Calories* initiative in support of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" anti-obesity campaign.

This voluntary commitment makes the calories in our products even more clear and consumer-friendly by **putting calorie information at consumers' fingertips at every point of purchase, including containers, company-controlled vending machines and fountain machines**. Consumers will be able to make informed choices about the beverages that are best for themselves and their families at any given time.



Conclusion

All of us – policymakers, parents, educators, industries and community leaders – have a responsibility to do our part to help teach our children and all citizens how to have a healthy lifestyle. The beverage industry is proud of its nutrition programs that have already had a proven and meaningful impact on the obesity problem.

The beverage industry supports the intent of H.B. 2516 and looks forward to helping all citizens understand the need for a comprehensive approach to have a healthy lifestyle by making smart, educated decisions about diet and exercise.



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Testimony on HB 2516, "Making an Appropriation for Early Childhood Health"

The American Heart Association supports the intent of HB 2516, but would like to recommend amendments.

As the bill states, obesity has become one of the leading health issues for our state. If left unchecked, it holds the potential to cripple Hawaii's health care system and Hawaii's businesses that largely cover employee healthcare costs.

Obesity, however, is not just a childhood epidemic. To effectively check the skyrocketing obesity rates, the AHA feels the issue must be addressed comprehensively. That means working to reduce obesity in adults, as well as children. It also means going beyond simple attempts to educate the public about the risk factors leading to obesity, and enacting strong policy efforts to encourage a move towards living healthier lifestyles.

As the bill mentions, sugar-sweetened beverages, while not the only cause of obesity in Hawaii's adults and children, are one of the leading dietary factors. They represent approximately 15 percent of the calories consumed on average, the single largest contributor of calorie intake, and most sugar-sweetened beverages contain little or no nutritional value. While candy (6%) and grain or dairy-based desserts (19%) combine to represent 25% of added sugars in the U.S. diet, sugar sweetened beverages represent 50% of added sugars in our diet. Thus, any discussion of reducing obesity must begin with policies that discourage overconsumption of those beverages.

Why target sugar-sweetened beverages? Reducing energy intake by only 100 calories per day (roughly 1 can of sugar-sweetened beverage) could prevent weight gain in over 90% of the population. The increased tax revenue generated by a sugar-sweetened beverage tax could be used to expand obesity prevention on a more comprehensive scale, such as to add qualified physical education instructors and classroom time back into Hawaii's elementary and middle schools where both PE class time and quality PE instructors have largely disappeared.

Our concern is that the beverage industry's involvement in the proposed task force will result in efforts to detract attention away from addressing overconsumption of calories to a focus only on physical activity, or burning of calories. That would be a recipe for failure. To burn off just one can of sugar-sweetened soda it would take about 20 minutes of treadmill running, and that amount of exercise would not compensate for any other calories consumed through meals. To be truly effective, any campaign to reduce obesity needs to be comprehensive and address both reductions in calorie consumption and increased physical activity.

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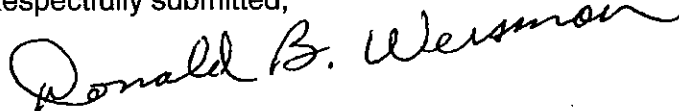
***"Building healthier lives,
free of cardiovascular
diseases and stroke."***

While the AHA supports the intent of reducing obesity in Hawaii, it feels that the task force created under HB 2516 needs to address the issue **with both adults and children in mind, not just children**. As we've learned from working to reduce tobacco consumption, children are influenced by the actions of adults. If obesity is not addressed as a societal issue, attempts to change childhood behavior will be limited in their effectiveness.

The AHA also suggests that safeguards be added to the bill to **insure that the beverage industry's (or its partners') involvement in the proposed task force doesn't result in watered down efforts**. The beverage industry is quick to try to put the responsibility of reducing childhood consumption of its products on parents. What it fails to highlight, however, is that soft drinks remain legally available to children, and are often cheaper than healthier options, including bottled water. Parents cannot watch over their children every moment of the day. Marketers spend close to \$500 million dollars a year to reach children and adolescents with messages about sugary drinks, more than they spend on any other category. To ask representatives of that industry to participate in *reducing* youth consumption of their products would be both naïve and foolish. The industry's tactic will be to attempt to focus efforts on only addressing physical activity, not on reducing caloric consumption. That must be avoided to insure that an effective campaign to address the obesity epidemic is achieved.

Hawaii's obesity epidemic must be addressed comprehensively through a combination of public education and strong, progressive policy aimed at encouraging the public toward living healthier. The future of our public's health and all Hawaii businesses' economic health (not just the beverage industry) depends on it.

Respectfully submitted,



Donald B. Weisman
Hawaii Government Relations/Mission:Lifeline Director



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Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

From: Katherine Murphy, Executive Director
Hawaii Association for Education of Young Children (HAEYC)
DATE: Tuesday, February 7, 2012
Subject: H.B. 2516, Relating to Early Childhood Health

The Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC) offers this testimony in **support** of H.B. 2516.

The Mission of HAEYC is “to promote, support, and expand quality and professionalism in early childhood programs and services for Hawaii’s young children and their families.” We promote values that encompass an array of practices, which include a collective effort to improve all early childhood programs.

H.B. 2516 establishes practices that promote healthy lifestyles from early childhood that will continue throughout the life span of an individual. This bill promotes programs that raise awareness to the adverse consequences of obesity at an early age. The elements of H.B. 2516 are in correlation with the mission and values of HAEYC in providing services for Hawaii’s young children and their families, and we will continue to be a positive contributor to the State’s fight against obesity. Hence, HAEYC strongly supports this bill.

HAEYC would like to continue to be a positive contributor to ongoing policy conversations about Hawaii’s children. Our volunteers and staff would be happy to provide you more information to facilitate your decision-making. Please contact us at 942-4708 or haeyc@hawaiihaeyc.org.

HAEYC represents nearly 1,000 members who are early childhood development and educational professionals across the state.

HAEYC’s mission is to promote, support, and expand quality and professionalism in early childhood programs and services for Hawaii’s children (0-8) and their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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Respectfully Submitted,

Katherine E. Murphy
Executive Director
HAEYC

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for Hawai'i's young children (0-8) and their families.*

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Aloha United Way

Testimony on HB 2516 Making an Appropriation for Early Childhood Health

Dear Chair Rep. Ryan Yamane and Vice-Chair Rep. Dee Morikawa and Committee members,

I am Howard S. Garval, President and Chief Executive Officer of Child & Family Service, Hawaii's oldest human services nonprofit organization whose mission is **strengthening families and fostering the healthy development of children.**

I am writing in support of HB 2516 Making an Appropriation for Early Childhood Health

Childhood and adult obesity have reached epidemic proportions in this country and in Hawaii. The human, social, health care/medical and financial costs are staggering! There is also growing research that sugary beverages are a major contributor to childhood obesity. We need to do so much more to prevent this serious condition from developing in children. HB 2516 proposes several modest recommendations to address this epidemic. With a recovering but still weak economy here in Hawaii, the funds being proposed are reasonable, but as the economy improves, we need to do so much more. A stronger investment in prevention through education and increased awareness as well as promoting healthier diet and adequate physical exercise will be needed to have an impact.

I applaud the authors of this legislation that takes an important step in elevating Hawaii's commitment to our keiki.

I urge your support of this legislation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Aloha,
Howard S. Garval, President & CEO
Child & Family Service

Our Mission: Strengthening Families and Fostering the Healthy Development of Children