



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

HONOLULU

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

SENATE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
Senator David Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

February 23, 2012
9:00 a.m. Room 211
Testimony in SUPPORT on SB 2545 SD1
Relating to Education

Chair Ige, Vice-Chair Kidani and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill (SB) 2545 SD1, Relating to Education (ED).

While SB 2545 SD1 is not identical to the Administration's bill SB 2781, the important objective to support early childhood education is the same. The Governor's Office will continue to work with the Legislature in support of SB 2545 SD1 as we believe it advances one of the Governor's more important priorities.

The Abercrombie Administration fully supports any positive action towards a comprehensive early childhood system that prepares our Hawaii's children, prenatal to age five, for success in school and life. One of the critical components of a comprehensive early childhood system is providing access to high quality early childhood education also known as early learning programs.

Therefore, the Abercrombie Administration is in strong support of the establishment of an executive office on early learning, establishment of the early learning advisory board to replace the early learning council, and directing the executive office on early learning to submit before the 2013 state Legislature's regular session, an implementation plan for the development of the early learning system, with a focus on targeted four year olds.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2545 SD1.



SB 2545, SD 1
RELATING TO EDUCATION
Committee on Ways and Means

February 23, 2012

9:00 a.m.

Room 211

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS** SB 2545, SD 1, which would establish the executive office on early learning and an early learning advisory board. In addition, SB 2545 would repeal junior kindergarten.

According to *Ka Huaka'i: Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment* (2005), the number of Native Hawaiian children younger than age five will more than double in the next fifty years, from 24,677 in the year 2000 to 65,870 in 2050 (p. 140). This dramatic demographic shift suggests the need to ensure adequate public and private resources to accommodate a faster growth rate for younger Native Hawaiians in our state. The establishment of the executive office on early learning and advisory board is a first, right step towards planning for the educational success of our keiki.

In regards to the advisory board, OHA proposes the following amendments. First, because of the large increase in the percentage of Native Hawaiian children younger than five in the coming years, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, as constitutionally mandated chief advocate for Hawaiians, requests voting representation on the advisory board. Second, OHA supports the request of 'Aha Pūnana Leo for representation on the advisory board as there are no provisions to address Native Hawaiian and Hawaiian language issues and concerns in early learning. Lastly, OHA believes that our collective addition would also advance other constitutional requirements.

Therefore, OHA urges the committee to PASS SB 2545, SD 1 with the suggested amendments. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony presented before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 23, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

By Linda K. Johnsrud

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost, University of Hawai'i

SB 2545 SD1: RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The University of Hawai'i is in strong support of SB 2545 SD1 that establishes the executive office of early learning, replaces the early learning council with the early learning advisory board, and makes an appropriate to establish the executive office of early learning.

Recognizing that a child's positive early learning experiences have significant benefit to individual lifelong learning capacity and to society, the University concurs that it is critical and urgent to establish an office and director of early learning at the executive level. SB 2545 SD1 establishes, in the proposed executive office of early learning, the responsibility for overseeing, developing, and assessing early care and education programs across the state, coordinating programs and policy efforts across agencies, and creates a state plan for an early learning system. This office will build upon progress that has been made throughout many years in Hawai'i by the efforts of the existing Early Learning Council, state agencies, and public, private, and community groups.

A systematic approach toward early care and learning has the potential of enhancing existing capacity of services and use of resources. As a member of the Early Learning Council, one of the areas of highest concern to the University is the access to and relevance of educational programs for the early childhood workforce. To meet the needs of this workforce requires a coordinated approach and understanding of needs across different sectors and regions of the state. An executive office, as described in SB 2545, could create such a coordinated approach that would support our own review of academic and workforce programs at the University to meet the state's needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2545 SD1.

From: [William K. \(Billy\) Richards Jr.](#)
To: [WAM Testimony](#)
Cc: [Jan Dill](#)
Subject: SB 2545 SD1
Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2012 4:08:53 PM
Attachments: [SB2545_SD1_JED-Testimony.docx](#)

Testimony (comment) for SB 2545 SD1

[COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS](#)
Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

AMENDED NOTICE OF DECISION MAKING

DATE: Thursday, February 23, 2012
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 211
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Billy Richards
Director of Communications
Partners In Development Foundation
Annex Rm 19
<http://pidf.org>

Serving Hawai'i's Families, Living Hawaiian Values

February 22, 2012

The Honorable Senator David Ige
Chairman - The Senate Committee on Ways & Means (WAM)
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211
Honolulu HI 9681

RE: SB 2545 SD1 Relating to Education

Aloha Senator Ige:

Partners In Development Foundation, a non-profit organization that serves thousands in our community through early childhood education, supports the establishment of the executive office on early learning, and the early learning advisory board to replace the early learning council.

It is encouraging to know that you as legislators are aware of the importance of early childhood education (preschool), and the critical need that we have in Hawai'i to ensure that our youngest learners are entering school with a good educational foundation.

However, it is because of this need that we are concerned with the proposed repeal of the Junior Kindergarten (JK) program. Doing so may deny as many as 6,000 children access to quality education in preparation for entry into the elementary school system as a kindergartener.

While we are supportive of the opening portions of the legislation, we sincerely hope that the repeal of the JK can be delayed until a program is in place to serve this otherwise gap-group of four year old keiki.

Na'u Me Ka Pono,

Jan E. Hanohano Dill
President
Partners In Development Foundation

Hawaii State Senate
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Testimony by
Early Learning Council
February 23, 2012
S.B. 2545 S.D.1– Relating to Education

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and Committee Members:

The Early Learning Council (“ELC”) offers this testimony in support of S.B. 2545 S.D.1.

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.

Since its inception, the ELC has completed and received approval for a statewide early childhood system framework, has partnered and provided advice on the development of a State Quality Improvement and Rating System, has supported the drafting of professional competence requirements for early learning practitioners, and most recently completed a Fiscal Mapping study (funded by the Omidyar Foundation) to measure the resources currently available in the State for Early Childhood services (e.g. education, health, nutritional and social services, special education services and family and professional training and development. Finally, the ELC has supported the “Be My Voice” campaign, which is targeted to impact the next biennium.

The ELC will comment on some of the broad provisions of the Bill.

- **Junior Kindergarten:** We are writing to **support the delay** in eliminating junior kindergarten and we respectfully request an amendment. In addition to the proposed delay, the ELC believes this legislation should authorize the development of an early learning program, funded through a public/private partnership, for all four-year-old children falling within the “gap” period of August 1 – December 31. We believe that this is critically important as a significant number of Hawaii keiki, families and our community may be negatively affected if there were no delay and the junior kindergarten program were to close.
- **Public/Private Early Learning Program:** In addition, S.B. 2545 S.D. 1 recognizes the need to establish a phased implementation plan for a truly collaborative public/private four-year-old program, and it considers the benefits of changing the junior kindergarten into an early learning program. These relate

directly to the ELC's focus areas of Early Education and Care and Parent Education and Family Support, and represent a significant step in establishing a comprehensive array of services for our most vulnerable children. The ELC is heartened to hear of collaborative discussions between the Office of Early Child Development and the DOE to begin such planning.

The members of the ELC will discuss certain aspects of the bill with legislators at the March 16th ELC meeting in order to develop more clarity regarding these proposed changes. We look forward to working with legislators to provide insight regarding the important work and essential purpose of the ELC as it continues to improve and expand early learning opportunities in Hawaii. We strongly support advancing this bill and will work collaboratively and proactively with the legislature and the broader community to preserve and promote these early education efforts. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Robert Peters
Chair, Early Learning Council



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Written Testimony of the League of Women Voters of Hawaii in regard to
SB 2545 SD1 Relating to Education

Presented before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 23, 2012, 9:00 a.m., Conf. Room 211

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the committee.

My name is Valere McFarland and I am Education Chair for the League of Women Voters – Hawaii. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of our members throughout Hawaii. The League applauds the state of Hawai'i for working to establish a collaborative public/private four-year-old program within an early childhood system that prepares our children prenatal to age five for success in school and life. One of the key components in such a system will be to give the families of children in this system *choice* in providing education opportunities for their children. The League respectfully submits the following input for your consideration with regard to the Junior Kindergarten program.

SB 2545 SD1 provides an end date of the 2013-2014 school year for the Junior Kindergarten program established in 2004. **We are concerned about the lack of any language in this bill that would provide a dedicated funding stream for the approximately 6,000 late born five year olds who would have been eligible for the Junior Kindergarten program.** Families who had planned for their children to participate in the Junior Kindergarten program will now have to make alternative arrangements. And because of the difficult economic climate we have in Hawaii, with more than 50% of these families living in poverty, their choices may be limited to caretaking by friends or relatives. Thus, for an entire cohort of late born five year old children, the opportunity to receive a quality early childhood education is extremely limited.

Many of the nearly 6,000 children impacted by the abolishment of the Junior Kindergarten program are from low income families, and are 'at-risk' of not completing their education career. In addition to economic challenges that prohibit most of these parents from affording quality early childhood education programs, the available spaces in Head Start and other programs are not sufficient to absorb this group. Forcing families to compete for spaces in these nearly full programs adds an unfair burden. Those who planned to enroll their children in Junior Kindergarten will now have to adjust by competing for spaces in nearly full preschool programs, or they will be forced to find relatives or friends who can provide child care.

It is regularly acknowledged in Hawaii by the political system, by the populace, and by educators that the best investment we can make is to ensure that all of our 'at-risk' kids start school healthy and ready to learn. There is no debate on that and a survey of the public would likely find a large majority would agree that we should be funding childhood education for this group of children. Economically, we cannot afford to allow this group to fail between the cracks.

Thus, the League of Women Voters - Hawai'i wants to stress, without any doubt, that those children born August through December and who have gone to public kindergarten in the fall of 2014-2015 must have a public option available to them in that year. We urge you to provide a safety net in the form of a concrete educational and financial alternative for these nearly 6,000 children, many of whom are from low income families.

February 22, 2012

The Honorable Senator David Ige
Chairman - The Senate Committee on Ways & Means (WAM)
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211
Honolulu HI 9681

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However, it is because of this need that we are concerned with the proposed repeal of the Junior Kindergarten (JK) program. Doing so may deny as many as 6,000 children access to quality education in preparation for entry into the elementary school system as a kindergartener.

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President
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