

L A T E

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February 23, 2011

Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator David Y. Ige, Chair  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

**Hearing:**  
9:00 A.M., Thursday, February 24, 2011  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211

**RE: SB 925, SD1 – Relating to Children**

**Testimony in Opposition**

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means, Thank you for the opportunity to offer this written testimony in opposition to SB925, SD1 which would establish a hospital-based screening and assessment intensive home visitation program under the Department of Health, and would fund this program with an appropriation of \$3,000,000 from the Hawaii Tobacco Settlement Special Fund.

The American Cancer Society Hawaii Pacific Inc. is a community-based, voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer. **This mission includes advocating for access to quality health care, medical and biomedical research, public health policy, and effective tobacco control measures.** Take all together these priorities have helped us turn the corner in the battle against cancer. We would note that cancer rates have been in a decline for the last 20 years. Because of this we have prevented some 767,000 deaths.

**The Society is keenly aware of the need for the Healthy Start program in Hawaii and recognizes that young parents need extra guidance, support, and education to raise healthy children.** Babies born to teen mothers are more likely to have insufficient health care, fall victim to abuse and neglect; at the same time we also see equal value in having a viable and sustainable tobacco control program dedicated to reducing the negative impact on the health of Hawaii's children and youth.

**The last several years have not been healthy ones for the tobacco settlement special fund. Because of the state's budget crisis the allocation into the fund has been cut from 25% to 12.5% to 6.5% today. This provides slightly less than \$3,000,000 annually to the fund. The fund is expected to expend \$8.5 million this coming fiscal year.**

American Cancer Society Hawai'i Pacific, Inc., 2370 Nu'uauu Avenue, Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-1714  
●Phone: (808) 595-7500 ●Fax: (808) 595-7502 ●24-Hour Cancer Info: (800) 227-2345 ●<http://www.cancer.org>

If this fund is not protected there soon will be no money for tobacco control. You will then see major increases in both the adult and youth smoking rates. In the end this increase will cost our state hundreds of millions of dollars in tobacco related illness including cancers and heart disease.

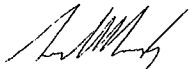
**We would point out to the committee that Hawaii's youth smoking rate is currently at 11.3%, the second lowest in the nation. Ten years ago the youth smoking rate was 38.4%. This dramatic reduction in smoking can be attributed to Hawaii's effective tobacco control efforts over the last decade. This effort was funded in most part by the tobacco settlement special fund via community grants to nonprofit organizations statewide.**

We would recommend to the committee that they consider utilizing funding for Healthy Start from SB 1289, SD1, by re-amending that measure to include the sugary beverage fee that was deleted by the subject matter committee. A 1¢ per oz fee increase will generate \$65 million for the State of Hawaii. Double that, and revenue would increase to \$130 million. This would be more than enough to fund Healthy Start and other health and human service programs that may be poised for extinction.

**Both healthy start and our tobacco control program have had positive impacts in our community. Let's act in a manner that preserves both.** We would ask that this committee consider funding the healthy start program not from tobacco funds but instead from sugary beverage tax revenues.

Mahalo for allowing us the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB925, SD1.

Sincerely,



George S. Massengale, JD  
Director of Government Relations

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The Honorable Representatives and Senators  
State of Hawaii, Joint Hearings  
Twenty-Fifth Legislature  
State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Subject: Letter of Strong Support of SB 925 and companion HB614- Healthy Start; Home Visitation;  
Department of Health Appropriations

Aloha Dear Legislators,

My name is Ave Diaz and I am writing to urge you to support funding for the reinstatement of the Healthy Start Home Visitation program on all islands in the state of Hawaii. I believe thinking outside the box is key; increasing taxes on non essential items such as alcohol, tobacco and soda drinks are viable measures that could generate revenues to fund Healthy Start during these hard economic times. Adding a few pennies per dollar on real estate and tourism transactions are also a possibility.

As a social worker, I have first hand experience with families in need of the safety net provided by the Family Support Workers in the Healthy Start program. The 5 Protective Factors needed for adequate family functioning to provide children better chances of growing into productive and healthy citizens are:

- 1- Bonding & Attachment that leads to Social and Emotional Competency.
- 2- Knowledge of Child & Youth Development and Parenting skills.
- 3- Parent Resiliency, ability to cope with stressors appropriately and to recuperate.
- 4- Social Connections.
- 5- Concrete Supports (housing, food, adequate and fair employment, financial and other resources)

The Healthy Start program ensures that families have guidance and support in achieving and maintaining these Protective Factors, avoiding future state expenditures over problems with child abuse and neglect, ill health, poor academic functioning, social misconduct, poverty, domestic violence, substance abuse and dependency on the state welfare system. Funding Healthy Start is a wise and necessary investment for our communities across all islands!

In this time of greater need, aside from parents and children falling through the cracks, agencies and staff workers providing the safety net services have been downsized, with workers having to apply for subsistence benefits themselves. "Penny wise and pound foolish" policies will in the long run not only drain finances for the state, but will cause human suffering that could be avoided. As legislators, I urge you to protect our most vulnerable populations through adequately funding safety net programs such as Healthy Start!

Mahalo for your service to the people of Hawaii!

Ave Diaz