



# HILOPA'A **LATE**

Family to Family Health Information Center

Date: March 27, 2012

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Senator Josh Green, M.D., Chair  
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

Fr: Leolinda Parlin, State Coordinator for Family Voices of Hawai'i

Re: **SUPPORT – SCR101/SR89** – DELARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTHIN HAWAI'I

On behalf of Family Voices of Hawai'i, I offer testimony in support of SCR101 and SR89 which declares each year the month of April to be Autism Awareness Month. As an organization, Family Voices is national grass roots organization of family of friends of child with special health care needs. In Hawai'i, we operate the federally funded Hilopa'a Family to Family Health Information Center.

As highlighted in the resolution, Autism is an equal opportunity disability. It does not discriminate by socioeconomic status or ethnicity. The numbers of new children diagnosed are increasing each year. SCR101 and SR89 provides the opportunity to continue to raise attention and awareness to this disorder. The continued attention and awareness in Autism in recent years has enabled significant research in Autism. This research has generated evidence based best practices in intervention and treatment.

I apologize for not providing testimony in person today. In celebrating Autism, today we are training professionals in navigating the system of care for children with special needs and their families as well as on the M-CHAT, which is also highlighted in the resolution.

**Green4 - Mailene**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, March 26, 2012 10:21 PM  
**To:** HTHTestimony  
**Cc:** spin@doh.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for SCR101 on 3/27/2012 1:30:00 PM

Testimony for HTH 3/27/2012 1:30:00 PM SCR101

Conference room: 229  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Ivalee Sinclair, Chair  
Organization: Special Education Advisory Council  
E-mail: [spin@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:spin@doh.hawaii.gov)  
Submitted on: 3/26/2012

**Comments:**

SEAC supports SCR 101 as an important means to bring more media attention to the importance of diagnosing autism early and providing early intervention and educational services to allow students with disabilities to benefit from their education and live meaningful, productive lives as adults. Hawaii early intervention programs and public schools have seen the numbers of children and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders rise significantly in the last ten years, and these students' complex needs require significant resources. By identifying and supporting their needs early through evidence-based interventions, these students are more likely to require fewer specialized services over their lifetimes.

To the HTH committee regarding SCR 101, hearing date 3/27/12 at 1330:

My name is Miki Wong, and I am a dietitian at Shriners' Hospital for Children. I am writing to support resolution SCR 101, to declare April as Autism Awareness Month in Hawaii. I view this resolution as an opportunity/avenue to increase public awareness for autism in Hawaii, and promote the message of early screening. Early screening allows for early intervention which results in improved outcomes. Improved outcomes equates to improved quality of life, independence in children who develop autism.

Thank you for submitting this for consideration.

**LATE**

Testimony Transmittal Cover

**Testifier's name:** Susan Emley

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Health

**Hearing date:** March 27, 2012 at 1:30 pm.

**Measure number:** SCR101 DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS  
AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN HAWAI'I.

**Number copies the Committee is requesting:** 1 copy (including original)



Susan Emley  
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March 26, 2012

The Honorable Josh Green, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health  
Twenty-Seventh Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: SRC 150 DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS  
AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN HAWAII'.

Dear Chair Green, Vice Chair Nishihara, and members of the Committee,

My name is Susan Emley and I am a master's degree candidate in Educational Psychology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am also a former Department of Education employee who worked with children enrolled in special education programs for many years. I am providing testimony in support of SCR101 declaring the month of April of each year as autism awareness month in Hawaii'i.

Autism is a complex neuro-developmental disability which is now recognized to affect as many as 1 in 110 children in Hawaii'i and across the nation, a number that has been dramatically on the rise. Children with autism may have a range of difficulties including those of basic communication, social interactions, and repetitive behaviors.

Improving the early identification of autism through screening programs such as "Learn the Signs, Act Early" is critical for the wellbeing of Hawaii's youngest and most vulnerable citizens. The design of the autism screening program is important as it aims to support families with young children at their 18 and 24 month well child visits to their pediatric health care provider. These visits are scheduled at times when important developmental milestones are expected to be seen and any delays may be first evident. By using the pro-active approach of universal screening, children who may potentially have autism can be referred for timely developmental assessments. Parents, family members, and care givers can then be given important information and referred to State and community resources and supports.

From my experiences working with children with special health and education needs I have seen firsthand how devastating the effects of autism spectrum disorders can be. However, when children are identified early, they can receive evaluations and appropriate intervention services to support their special needs during the critical phases of their development. Caring, supporting and educating these children across

their life-span who suffer from developmental and cognitive delays is a common goal for both health, and educational professionals, and the families who love them.

**I strongly support SCR 101** and believe that improving awareness will result in the community's better understanding autism. These efforts to increase the understanding of children with autism will provide them acceptance, and expand their opportunities to become contributing members of society.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony in consideration of this resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Emley