



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 04/02/2013

**Committee:** House Finance

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** SB 1083,HD1(hscr1059) RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

**Purpose of Bill:** Amends section 103-55(c), Hawaii Revised Statutes, to make wage certification inapplicable to contracts to provide transportation services for school children.

**Department's Position:**

The department supports Senate Bill 1083, HD1 (hscr1059), as we believe that making wage certification inapplicable to school bus contracts will help stimulate competition among school bus vendors.

The proposal is also consistent with recommended changes contained in the November 2012, Student Bus Transportation Final Report commissioned by the Department, to increase competition for student transportation services.

Testimony of Ku'ulani Keohokalole

In Support of bills

S.B. 1093 SD2 HD1 Related to School Readiness  
S.B. 1095 SD2 HD1 Related to Early Childhood Education  
& S.B. 1084 SD1 HD1 Related to Constitutional Amendment

Addressed to House Committee on Finance

Date: Tuesday, April 2, 2013

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Room: 308

Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Nishimoto and Members of the Committee:

I am submitting my testimony on the early childhood bills before you related to School Readiness, the Constitutional Amendment and Early Childhood Education.

**I support these measures wholeheartedly, and this is why:**

As a parent of a 2 year old, I know the value of early learning. Sure, grandma and grandpa who are both in their early sixties and retired could have watched him full-time, saving us money. We pay \$650.00 per month out of pocket, living on one full-time income (my husband is a full-time law student at UH). But we know the importance of his attending preschool, for several reasons:

1. We cannot assume that grandparents are the solution to this issue. We are fortunate to have one set of parents that are home, true; yet, *Center on the Family* has reported less and less grandparents spending time with their grandchildren, due to the demands of a rough economy, and people having to work well into their sixties to make ends meet. I've heard some lawmakers say that "well, grandparents can watch children". But the reality is, many are not at home to do so!
2. Without the proper tools or conducive learning environment, grandparents who ARE watching grandchildren under the age of 5, are not adequately preparing children for Kindergarten. In far too many households, the TV becomes a grandparent's best aid, and while the shows have improved to be more educational, the social interaction, outside time, creative play, and structured learning is far lacking in those environments.

In addition, many times a sore lack of nutrition accompanies the TV watching, so children under the age of 5 are basing their diet on whatever is provided them, whether it is McDonald's, processed, or junk food, in a time where their brain and nutritional development is so crucially important at their foundation.

3. In an age where No Child Left Behind has upped the stakes for even the littlest of school-aged children, those kids who come into school without the proper readiness (being able to share, sit down, listen, not be constantly distracted and hitting or bullying other children) already start off *behind*.

And now that Junior Kindergarten is essentially gone, this means that some children will be behind as they begin school nearly turning 6 years old. Knowing how rapidly these little brains develop, we need to do something NOW, while we can have so much impact on their development.

It behooves our state to make this important investment in our keiki. Do we want:

- more high school and college graduates?
- a stronger, more prepared and educated workforce?
- less people in homelessness?
- less crime and less people to house in prisons?

Then we need to start now. This is the answer. Thousands of families around Hawai'i like us know the importance of sacrificing and making the investment. It's now on the legislators to come to that same important realization.

Mahalo again for the opportunity to testify on these measures and I pray that you continue to move forward with this – for the keiki – and future of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Ku'ulani Keohokalole, M.A.  
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