



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 11, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Mele Carroll, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Barbara Yamashita, Deputy Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 2234, S.D. 1 – RELATING TO EXEMPTIONS FROM CHILD CARE LICENSING**
Hearing: Tuesday, March 11, 2014, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to repeal the child care licensing exemption for child care programs licensed by the Hawaii council of private schools and appropriate funds to the Department for the licensing of private child care programs.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this bill as long as the appropriation language remains.

If the licensing exemption is repealed, the DHS will require additional funds and positions to sufficiently and effectively maintain the monitoring and oversight of the child care licensing programs, including conducting suitability assessments and background checks. The estimated resources necessary to carry out the purpose of S.B. 2234, S.D. 1, would require eight full time Child Care Social Workers and related operating expenses, totaling \$543,685 per year (\$424,170 general funds and \$119,515 federal funds.) This includes salaries, fringe, and operating costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING
HONOLULU

GG WEISENFELD
DIRECTOR

Testimony in **Support** of
S.B. 2234 S.D. 1, Relating to Exemptions from Child Care Licensing
By GG Weisenfeld, Director

House Committee on Human Services
March 11, 2014
10:00 a.m., Room 329

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

The Executive Office on Early Learning supports this bill. Our position reflects the Department of Human Services' support of this measure to repeal the exemption allowed for child care programs licensed by the Hawaii Council of Private Schools (HCPS), with additional resources for the Department to license child care programs.

We believe DHS will ensure that standards for health and safety will be upheld.

It is our understanding that DHS has not yet approved HCPS licensing standards since the exemption was first approved pursuant to Act 163, Session Laws of Hawaii 2012. Therefore, DHS continues to license preschools that belong to the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



Tuesday, March 11, 2014
10:00 AM
Conference Room 329

TESTIMONY TO
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN SERVICES

RE: SB 2234 SD 1 – Relating to Exemptions from Child Care Licensing

Chair Carroll, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Witt, Executive Director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 99 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 33,000 students statewide. I also oversee the Hawaii Council of Private Schools (HCPS), our organization's licensing entity, that licenses all of our member schools.

HAIS would like to provide comments on Section 1 of SB 2234 SD1, which repeals the child care licensing exemption for child care programs licensed by the Hawaii Council of Private Schools.

- During the 2012 Legislative Session, unbeknownst to HAIS, **DHS** requested that the bill, which would later become Act 163 of the 2012 Session Laws of Hawaii and Act 140 of the 2013 Session Laws of Hawaii, be introduced. It was our understanding that DHS was limited in its resources and that they believed there should be consistency in the licensing and accreditation process for our pre-K through grade 12 member schools. We hold our member schools to a very high standard and would continue to do so if given the opportunity to license their pre-Ks as well.
- A Task Force, comprised of HAIS member school heads, early childhood representatives and DHS administrators was formed for the purpose of developing the standards and procedures for the licensing of group child care centers through the Hawaii Council of Private Schools (HCPS). After over two years of diligent work by the Task Force, the standards were developed and finalized, approved by DHS, and HCPS was scheduled to begin the transition in October 2013. The last hiccup in the procedures had to do with the child and adult abuse neglect checks, but we are confident that with DHS's cooperation we can find a way to resolve that issue. HAIS hired one FTE to coordinate the licensing of our schools with group child care centers and she worked for six months to ensure a smooth transition and that we upheld our promise to "meet or exceed" the standards set by DHS.

- Many hours and resources have already been expended on this collaboration with DHS to develop a program that would meet or exceed their licensing standards. We strongly believe that our standards enhance the current state licensing standards by assessing aspects of a pre-K program that foster a culture of continuous school improvement to ensure that our youngest keiki are safe **AND** that they receive an education of high quality.
- We, along with our member schools, continue to be excited by the prospect of this public-private partnership, thereby alleviating DHS Child Care Licensing Workers of the responsibility for licensing our schools. We understand that they have a large case load and limited resources and that our assistance would be greatly appreciated. We have heard directly from Child Care Licensing Workers themselves saying that it makes sense for HCPS to license the child care centers of our member schools because we already license their elementary schools and high schools. Years ago we were tasked by the Department of Education to oversee accreditation and licensing of our independent schools and this latest endeavor is a continuation of our commitment of working with the public sector and our member schools to deliver the best education for our students.
- With the necessary increase of group child care centers in the Fall to accommodate our late-born children, there will be an even greater need for relieving the state of the burden of licensing our schools.

We therefore humbly request that you continue to allow our member schools with child care centers to have **the option** of being exempt from DHS licensing and that you consider amending the bill by **keeping the HCPS exemption language intact and not repealing the exemption** .

Thank you for the opportunity to provide commentary on this section of the measure.

Sincerely,
Robert M. Witt, MEd



1806 South King Street, Suite 30 | Honolulu, HI 96826 | Ph: (808) 942-4708 | haeyc@hawaiiayc.org

Rep. Mele Carroll, Chair
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2014
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: Katherine Murphy, Executive Director
Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC)

RE: Senate Bill 2234 – Relating to exemptions from child care licensing.

Aloha Chair Carroll, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and members of the Committee. Hawaii'i Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC) **strongly supports** of SB 2234, SD1.

This bill will help assure that all children in early childhood programs serving children up to kindergarten entry are meeting Department of Human Services licensing standards, which are minimum health and safety standards set by the state. High quality programs start by meeting licensing standards. This measure also appropriates funds to the department of human services for the licensing of private child care programs.

HAEYC is advocating for high quality programs/schools being ready for all children (which includes well-prepared, adequately compensated teachers), addressing the whole child (which includes physical and mental health as well as the child's family), and mixed delivery systems to provide a variety of programs that will meet the variety of needs. Some families have the resources to provide stimulating, healthy experiences for their young children. Others need varying levels of assistance to do this.

We acknowledge the vision and courage it takes for legislators to enact laws that will come to full fruition after they leave office. Investing in early childhood development and education will be a lasting legacy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Katherine E. Murphy
Executive Director
HAEYC