

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

979

Honolulu, Hawaii

March 15, 2013

RE: S.B. No. 1093
S.D. 2
H.D. 1

Honorable Joseph M. Souki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Seventh State Legislature
Regular Session of 2013
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred S.B. No. 1093, S.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SCHOOL READINESS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to more adequately prepare Hawaii's children for success in school by establishing a School Readiness Program as part of the State's Early Learning System.

The Governor, Department of Education, Department of Human Resources Development, Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Department of Public Safety, Department of the Attorney General, Office of the Mayor of Hawaii County, University of Hawaii, Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu, Education Division of Chaminade University of Honolulu, the Community Children's Councils, Child and Family Service, Aloha United Way, Castle & Cooke Hawaii, Hawaii Business Roundtable, Harold K.L. Castle Foundation, Atherton Family Foundation, Colliers International - Hawaii, First Insurance Company of Hawaii, Early Learning Advisory Board, Good Beginnings Alliance, Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, Hawaii Construction Alliance, Hawaii P-20, Hawaii Pacific Health, Hui for Excellence in Education, Kamehameha Schools, The Pacific Resource Partnership, The Queen's Health Systems, Special Education Advisory Council, Kaneohe Ranch Company, Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i, Central Pacific Bank, PHOCUSED, Hui Mākua o

SB1093 HD1 HSCR EDN HMS 2013-2726



Kawaiha'ō, New Hope Leeward, The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, and over one hundred concerned individuals supported this measure. The Board of Education and Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children supported the intent of this bill. The 'Aha Pūnana Leo; Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture; Makauila, Inc.; Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani College of the University of Hawaii at Hilo; and over one hundred concerned individuals supported the measure with amendments. The Hawaii Catholic Conference, Hawaii Catholic Schools, and two concerned individuals opposed this bill. The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii, Hawaii Baptist Early Education Association, Faith Based Early Learning Coalition, and several concerned individuals provided comments.

Your Committee notes that this measure is one of three bills designed to implement the Early Learning System established in Chapter 302L, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). A comprehensive Early Education Program encompassing social-emotional and intellectual development that is tied to educational outcomes for all eligible preschool-aged children is the ultimate aim of the State's Early Learning System. However, the implementation of such a system is dependent upon the formation of public-private partnerships that require a voter-approved change to the Hawaii State Constitution. In the interim, the elimination of junior kindergarten and the change in the entry age for kindergarten, which will take effect in 2014 pursuant to Act 178, Session Laws of Hawaii 2012, necessitates a more immediate solution to accommodate the approximately 5,000 late-born students who will require a developmentally appropriate early learning program.

Your Committee finds that the junior kindergarten program, while designed to serve preschoolers in the year prior to kindergarten, has never fully been implemented and is not readily able to accommodate varying levels of enrollment. Independent junior kindergarten classrooms have only been developed at approximately one-third of Department of Education schools. Public schools with too few eligible students have either not accommodated those students at all, or have included them in kindergarten classrooms, which limits the amount of time and material dedicated specifically to the junior kindergarten level.

Conversely, this measure proposes a School Readiness Program that lays the foundation for a comprehensive early education program and addresses the needs, not only of late-born students affected by the elimination of junior kindergarten but also of all preschool-aged children in the State, by preparing them to enter



kindergarten with the socialization skills necessary to take full advantage of their public school education.

Your Committee finds that early learning experiences prepare students to flourish once they enter the public school system, ensuring that teachers spend less time rectifying deficiencies and more time guiding their students toward greater educational achievement.

It is your Committee on Education's intention that this measure be inclusive of the diverse array of early learning approaches, service deliveries, and settings available to preschool-aged children and their families. This diversity includes early education delivered in the Hawaiian language and through traditional Hawaiian instruction. However, your Committee recognizes that continued dialogue between the Legislature and the early learning community is required as this measure evolves through the legislative process. Should this measure move forward, your Committee respectfully encourages consideration of how procedures and guidelines may be included to allow the participation of early education programs delivered through Hawaiian medium education and other early learning approaches.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requiring the School Readiness Program to prioritize low- and moderate-income families;
- (2) Including providers exempt from licensure by the Department of Human Services under section 346-152, Hawaii Revised Statutes, as eligible providers of school readiness services;
- (3) Making unspecified the income level in the definition of a "low- and moderate-income family"; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 1093, S.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 1093, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Finance.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Education,

Roy M. Takumi

ROY M. TAKUMI, Chair



