

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 23 2014

RE: S.B. No. 2768
S.D. 2
H.D. 2
C.D. 1

Honorable Donna Mercado Kim
President of the Senate
Twenty-Seventh State Legislature
Regular Session of 2014
State of Hawaii

Honorable Joseph M. Souki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Seventh State Legislature
Regular Session of 2014
State of Hawaii

Madam and Sir:

Your Committee on Conference on the disagreeing vote of the Senate to the amendments proposed by the House of Representatives in S.B. No. 2768, S.D. 2, H.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO KINDERGARTEN,"

having met, and after full and free discussion, has agreed to recommend and does recommend to the respective Houses the final passage of this bill in an amended form.

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Amend the compulsory education law to make kindergarten mandatory;
- (2) Develop a statewide individualized kindergarten readiness system and establish an individualized kindergarten assessment system; and
- (3) Appropriate funds to the Department of Education to develop the statewide individualized kindergarten readiness system and readiness assessment system.



Your Committee on Conference finds that Hawaii currently does not require that children attend kindergarten, although ninety-seven percent of students eligible to attend do voluntarily enroll in either public or private kindergarten classes. Those who do not attend kindergarten are typically behind their peers in their academic and social development. This measure will enhance the educational achievement of Hawaii's youth by making attendance at a public or private kindergarten mandatory, unless otherwise exempted by law.

Your Committee on Conference finds that parents who choose to home school their child will be allowed to continue to do so under this measure. In addition, this measure will not affect parents who choose to send their child to a private school, where the mandatory kindergarten age may require a child to be five years of age by a certain date that is different than July 31.

Your Committee on Conference has amended this measure by:

- (1) Reinserting section 1 of the S.D. 2 version of this measure to emphasize the importance of early childhood education and the benefit of making kindergarten mandatory;
- (2) Reinserting section 3 of the S.D. 2 version of this measure, which amends section 302A-411, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to make kindergarten mandatory;
- (3) Further amending section 302A-411, HRS, to clarify that charter schools are not exempt from the requirement to have kindergarten programs;
- (4) Amending section 302A-411, HRS, and section 302A-1132, HRS, to clarify that beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, any parent, guardian, or other person having the responsibility for, or care of, a child who will be at least five years of age on or before July 31 of the school year shall enroll the child in a public school kindergarten unless the child is enrolled at a private school or the child's attendance is otherwise exempt under this section;
- (5) Removing part II of this measure, which would have required the Department of Education to develop a statewide individualized kindergarten readiness system and



establish an individualized kindergarten assessment system and appropriated funds to the Department;

- (6) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2014; and
- (7) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the managers of your Committee on Conference that is attached to this report, your Committee on Conference is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2768, S.D. 2, H.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Final Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2768, S.D. 2, H.D. 2, C.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the managers:

ON THE PART OF THE HOUSE

ON THE PART OF THE SENATE



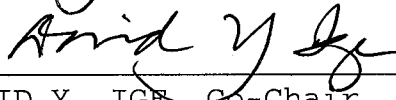
ROY M. TAKUMI, Co-Chair



JUSTIN H. WOODSON, Co-Chair



JILL N. TOKUDA, Chair



DAVID Y. IGE, Co-Chair



