



OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
STATE CAPITOL  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

**SHAN S. TSUTSUI**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

TESTIMONY OF  
THE OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
TO THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1596**  
Relating to Literacy

February 5, 2014

House Bill No. 1596 Provides funding to the Department of Human Services to establish a statewide literacy program utilizing local programs and nonprofits to provide direct services.

The Office of the Lieutenant Governor **supports the intent** of this measure. Literacy programs, as the one described in this measure have shown to be effective and beneficial not only to the children that attend but the family unit as a whole. The link between poverty and illiteracy has been well-documented and literacy programs such as Read Aloud America and Read to Me International are playing a valuable role in breaking this one significant contributing element in the poverty cycle. Funding for this program, however, should not supplant existing funds appropriated for current Human Services programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

February 11, 2014

**MEMORANDUM**

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

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 1596 – RELATING TO LITERACY**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 11, 2014; 9:30 AM  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this bill is to provide funding to the Department of Human Services to establish a statewide literacy program utilizing local programs and non-profits to provide direct services.

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** While the Department of Human Services (DHS) understands the positive value a statewide literacy program would have for adults, children; and for the communities where they reside, we respectfully oppose this measure as the Department has concerns on the appropriateness of such a program being placed within the Department of Human Services.

The Department had previously funded such a program from 2007 – 2011 using TANF federal funds. The basis for the funding was that the program provided a “family strengthening” service under TANF Purpose 3, not because the Department has expertise in the area of developing, monitoring, or implementing statewide literacy programs.

The Department is not the appropriate agency to administer and oversee a statewide literacy program. The Department does not possess the necessary expertise to measure baseline literacy in order to measure effectiveness a literacy program may have on its audience, or to be able to use such information to make decisions on suitable curricula, materials, implementation strategies, and overall administration of a statewide literacy program for the State.

Should the Legislature decide to pursue adoption, and appropriation, of this measure, the Department recommends that the Legislature consider placing such a program under an agency that either has experience in the area of developing, monitoring, and implementing statewide literacy programs, or experience in developing reading programs with measures for literacy progress.

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

**HB 1596**

**RELATING TO LITERACY**

**SUZANNE SKJOLD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
HAWAII LITERACY**

**February 10, 2014**

Chair Carroll and members of the House Committee on Human Services:

I am Suzanne Skjold, testifying on behalf of Hawaii Literacy on HB 1596, Relating to Literacy. Hawaii Literacy supports this measure.

Hawaii Literacy is a 501(c)(3) agency whose mission is “to help people gain knowledge and skills by providing literacy and lifelong learning services.” Founded in 1971, we are a well-established, volunteer-centered agency that each year leverages 8,000 volunteer hours to provide daily tutoring and literacy programs that help 2,700 low-income adults and children, most of whom live in public housing, build the reading, writing, school, and work-readiness skills that are crucial for self-sufficiency and greater opportunity. 75% of those we serve are children.

We support HB 1596 because there is a dire need to expand programs serving the literacy learning needs of Hawaii’s underprivileged communities. Across the state, about 1 in 6 adults, including many parents, lack basic literacy skills and are limited in the educational support they can provide their own children. The greatest predictor of a child’s future literacy and school success is the educational level of his or her parent.

Investing in quality and proven literacy programs in underserved areas across the state is a smart investment and one that children, adults and family units in greatest need can benefit from tremendously. By providing ongoing English language classes and tutoring, youth literacy activities, access to books and technology, caring staff and volunteer tutors, and parent workshops specifically tailored to families with low-literacy levels or limited English skills, we can effectively address disparities in school outcomes and employment caused by literacy deficiencies.

With funding for a statewide literacy program, Hawaii Literacy and other literacy programs in Hawaii would be able to fund and coordinate services for more of Hawaii’s people, and help build the literacy skills so many families need to improve their lives. Hawaii Literacy is unique because our model is one of direct service, focused in areas of greatest need.

Like other literacy programs in the state, our ability to expansion our programs to meet the full need for our services is currently limited by the difficulty of finding new government and private funding sources. We are confident that Hawaii Literacy – in partnership with the Department of Human Services and other nonprofit providers – can

productively serve increasing numbers of children, adults and families if stable funding for literacy programs is provided by the State to address both literacy promotion in families and crucially, to provide direct literacy services, tutoring, and support.

Hawaii Literacy urges this committee to advance HB 1596.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

#### Attachment Information

Hawaii Literacy's programs include:

- Family Literacy – Hawaii Literacy's Family Learning Centers at Mayor Wright Housing and Kuhio Park provide reading and learning programs for over 500 youth and parents in public housing. Books, computers and education programs are available afterschool and Saturdays.
- Adult Literacy – Hawaii Literacy provides 1-on-1 free tutoring for adults in basic reading and writing skills. Volunteer tutors are trained and certified in the ProLiteracy method which is proven and effective in teaching adults to read.
- The Bookmobile – Hawaii Literacy's bookmobile visits 13 sites on the Waianae Coast, including public housing, homeless shelters and Boys & Girls Clubs, and brings books, tablets, and educational activities to serves 2,000 children and adults in underserved communities during weekly visits.
- English Language Learner (ELL) Classes – Hawaii Literacy offers free language classes to adults at Kaumakapili Church, Mayor Wright Housing, and Kuhio Park in Honolulu. Sessions focus on relevant life-skills for adults and their children, including reading, writing, speaking, completing forms, and Citizenship.

ALOHA  
REPRESENTATIVE KOBAYASHI

Please amend HB1596 to add another organization **WorldPeacePlan.org** on page 2, line 11 after Read Aloud America and before "and Read to Me International..." so that the sentence reads, "Currently, valuable literacy programs such as Read Aloud America, WorldPeacePlan.org and Read to Me International are suffering from lack of state funding."

Founded in Hawaii in 2001, WorldPeacePlan.org is a recognized 501 c 3 non profit organization for purposes of literacy. EIN 99-0344269, NTEE Category Human Services.



---

R. Eric Butler Founder WorldPeacePlan.org

**kobayashi1-Joni**

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 04, 2014 12:53 PM  
**To:** HUS testimony  
**Cc:** mendezj@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1596 on Feb 11, 2014 09:30AM\*

**HB1596**

Submitted on: 2/4/2014

Testimony for HUS on Feb 11, 2014 09:30AM in Conference Room 329

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email [webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)

**kobayashi1-Joni**

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 11, 2014 6:43 AM  
**To:** HUSstestimony  
**Cc:** memarkley1@me.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1596 on Feb 11, 2014 09:30AM



**HB1596**

Submitted on: 2/11/2014

Testimony for HUS on Feb 11, 2014 09:30AM in Conference Room 329

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Maryellen Markley	Read Aloud America	Support	Yes

Comments: Dr. Maryellen Markley respectfully requests the opportunity to testify in person on behalf of Read Aloud America in support of House Bill 1596

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email [webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)