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Children's Action Network
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

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March 29, 2016

To: Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Deborah Zysman, Executive Director
Hawaii Children's Action Network

Re: **HB 2266, HD2 Making Appropriations for Early Learning – Support
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211, March 29, 2016, 9 A.M.**

**On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), formerly Good
Beginnings Alliance, we are writing in strong support of HB 2266, HD2
Making Appropriations for Early Learning.**

HCAN is committed to improving lives and being a strong voice advocating for Hawai'i's children. Last fall, HCAN convened input in person and online from more than 50 organizations and individuals that came forward to support or express interest for a number of issues affecting children and families in our state that resulted in the compilation of 2016 Hawai'i Children's Policy Agenda, which can be accessed at <http://www.hawaii-can.org/2016policyagenda>.

This bill seeks to restore funds for general operation costs for the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) for fiscal year 2016-2017 for the following purposes:

- (1) Travel for the Early Learning Advisory Board;
- (2) Secretary IV position for the EOEL; and
- (3) Research statistician VI position for the EOEL.

Hawaii was one of a handful of states that decreased their pre-k funding last year while overall other states' funding for pre-k programs increased by nearly

\$767 million, or 12 percent over FY2015-15. This supplemental funding for EOEL is needed to restore and maintain the minimum required operations to carry out its duties and functions; however, HCAN also supports a planned expansion of public pre-k programs in Hawaii's DOE and public charter schools so eligible children have access to programs that help them prepare for and have a better shot at succeeding in school.

Federal funding for EOEL's request was also earmarked in the state supplemental budget bill, HB 1700 HD1, by the House Finance Committee. While we support the effort to provide a funding source for this request, we want to be clear that EOEL has no federal funds forthcoming, which can be allocated for this provision. Therefore, HCAN urges the committee to approve a General Fund appropriation in the supplemental budget request and/or in this bill.

For these reasons, HCAN respectfully requests that members of the Senate Committee on Education pass HB 2266, HD2, to appropriate and restore operational funding for EOEL in the FY 2016-17 budget with state General Funds.



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

RE: HB 2266, HD1 – MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR EARLY LEARNING.

TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2016

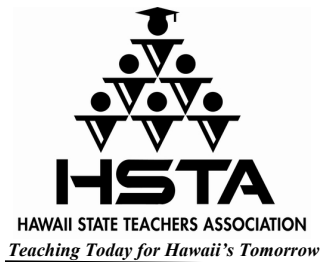
COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports HB 2266, HD2**, making appropriations for early learning.

As noted by an MIT working group on the topic, investments in early childhood education pay dividends for the formal preparation of children as learners and future citizens, while also benefiting taxpayers and boosting economic vitality. Research on the benefits of quality pre-kindergarten programs indicates that for every dollar invested in such opportunities, society saves four to eight dollars on remedial classes, special education, welfare programs, and criminal justice costs. Roughly 85 percent of a child's brain develops from birth to age five, according to modern neuroscience, emphasizing the importance of providing a quality learning environment during these formative years. Preschool brings an approximately \$4.20 return on investment for every dollar spent on quality early childhood services, especially in terms of longterm life skills. At the national level, every dollar spent on early childhood education saves taxpayers up to \$13.00 in future costs, including lowered healthcare costs, reduced rates of educational remediation and prison incarceration, and higher productivity. Access to quality pre-kindergarten programs not only helps working parents fulfill their responsibilities, but is essential for building a 21st century labor force.

Early childhood education is especially important for at-risk students. According to the High Scopes/Perry Preschool longitudinal study, at-risk children with access to



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quality early learning programs were 20 percent more likely to graduate from high school, 14 percent more likely to be employed, and 24 percent less likely to have been incarcerated by age 40 than peers without such access. As the Department of education continues to streamline educational accountability, particularly through the possible institution of merit pay and high-stakes evaluations for teachers and educational officers, it is imperative that we do all we can to ensure our children are “classroom ready,” meaning that they are prepared to receive basic instruction and effectively socialize with peers upon entering elementary school, placing both our keiki and their teachers on the path to success.

Utilizing public school resources for the provision of early learning, as does the Executive Office on Early Learning through its public preschool program, will place our children's futures in the hands of the state's most qualified education professionals, namely our certificated and licensed public school teachers. Additionally, public early learning programs will not set a nefarious precedent for the future adoption of school voucher programs at the elementary and secondary school level. Finally, this proposal does not violate the U.S. Constitution's and Hawaii State Constitution's Establishment Clauses, which bar preferential governmental treatment for religious institutions, ensuring that the state will not become ensnared in costly litigation because of a misappropriation of funds to a program that promotes a specific religious viewpoint. Public early learning will, instead, include research-based, developmentally appropriate, secular practices that are associated with better educational outcomes for children. While we support staffing and travel that advances our state's early learning initiatives, **we urge you to appropriate up to \$125 million for our state's public preschool program during the budget process**, guaranteeing statewide access to as many children as possible.

Because early childhood education is beneficial to lifetime learning, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Date: March 29, 2016

Where: State Capitol Room 211

TESTIMONY

By Ka'ano'i Walk
Kamehameha Schools

TO: Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee

RE: **HB 2453, HD1, SD1, Relating to Charter Schools**

E ka Luna Ho'omalua Tokuda, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalua Dela Cruz a me nā Lālā o kēia Kōmike o ka 'Aha Kenekoa, aloha! My name is Ka'ano'i Walk and I serve as the Senior Policy Analyst of the Kūamahi Community Education Group of Kamehameha Schools. House Bill 2266 HD2, SD1, relating to early learning makes appropriations to the Executive Office on Early Learning.

We are writing to **support** this measure.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is a statewide educational system supported by a trust endowed by Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, whose mission is to improve the capability and well-being of Native Hawaiian learners. We serve K-12 students through campus programs on O'ahu, Hawai'i and Maui, and three-and-four-year-olds at preschool sites statewide. In 2004, our Early Childhood Education division also began serving keiki from birth to three years old, as part of its Hi'ilani Early Childhood Collaborative program. We also provide scholarships to keiki attending other preschools and provide funding for child-family interaction programs that have filled a great need in rural communities.

Since its inception more than 20 years ago, the Kamehameha Schools Early Childhood Education Division has provided more than 11,000 keiki with their first preschool experience. Early childhood education and parental support is the cornerstone of our Education Strategic Plan adopted in 2005, which seeks to foster long-term intergenerational change in the way Native Hawaiian families approach learning. Research demonstrates that early education is a key factor in lifelong success for all children, and we strongly urge the legislature to promote, enhance and support the efforts of the State of Hawai'i to appropriately address the needs of Hawai'i's pre-kindergarten children.

We believe that this measure is necessary in support of early learning in the state of Hawai'i. We are committed to continuing to engage in dialog around early learning policies and proposals and strive to contribute in a positive and meaningful way. 'A'oha hana nui ke alu 'ia! No task is too large when we all work together! **Please advance this measure.** Mahalo nui.