



February 2, 2016

**To:** Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair; Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education

healthy  
mothers  
healthy  
babies

**From:** Lisa Kimura, Executive Director, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies

**Re:** Testimony in Support of S.B. 2235

COALITION  
OF HAWAII

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Harimoto, and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii (HMHB) strongly supports S.B. 2235, which establishes a sexual abuse prevention instructional program for public schools, sets guidelines for instruction, and is modeled after Erin's Law. Sexual abuse remains a serious and ongoing threat to the safety, health and well-being of children and young people in the State of Hawaii. Nationally, 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men have been the victim of sexual assault in their lifetimes. Of these, 44% were under the age of 18 at the time of the assault.

Given the high incidence of sexual abuse perpetrated against minors, it is important that children and young people be taught the knowledge and skills necessary to protect themselves against sexual violence and obtain help to end abuse as quickly as possible. Moreover, it is critical that those who interact the most with children and young people, including parents, other guardians, educators and school staff, receive sufficient training to understand issues of sexual violence and respond appropriately.

S.B. 2235 is necessary to provide the State of Hawaii the means to design and plan a strong, sustainable program to consistently make sexual abuse prevention education available to all public school students.

In order to do so, this measure would follow the model of several other states that have successfully adopted Erin's Law, by bringing together stakeholders from the legislature, relevant state agencies and the community in order to collaboratively review existing policies, programs and curricula; assess service gaps and needs; and make well-informed recommendations through a transparent, report-driven process.

Currently, despite the combined efforts of the State Department of Education (DOE), teachers from both public and private schools, and the University of Hawaii's Teacher Institute of Education, implementation of age-appropriate, evidence-based sexual abuse prevention education curricula is reportedly not consistent system-wide, and resources for the provision of training and education are limited.

Consequently, students in Hawaii may not receive regular, consistent child abuse prevention education, nor are parents informed about child abuse topics. In addition, many school teachers and staff do not receive sufficient training on talking to students about child sexual abuse

prevention, the effects of sexual abuse on children, handling sexual abuse disclosures, and mandated reporting.

Laws requiring that public school systems implement a program of regular, consistent sexual abuse prevention education for students, teacher and staff training, and parental involvement, have passed in 26 states and Guam. These laws and the programs they would create represent a national trend in safety, health and well-being education and are collectively referred to as “Erin’s Law” after an Illinois survivor of child sexual abuse who has led the national movement.

S.B. 2235 would be a tremendous step towards ensuring system-wide sexual abuse prevention education; consistently making sexual abuse prevention education available to all public school students, pre-kindergarten through grade 12.

Therefore, we respectfully urge you to support S.B. 2235.

LATE

From:  
To:  
Cc:  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for SB2235 on Feb 3, 2016 13:15PM\*  
Date: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 8:22:13 AM

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**SB2235**

Submitted on: 2/3/2016

Testimony for EDU on Feb 3, 2016 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dylan Armstrong	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.

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