



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**Executive Office on Early Learning**  
1390 Miller Street, Room 303  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 27, 2017

**TO:** Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Ty Cullen, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

**FROM:** Lauren Moriguchi, Director  
Executive Office on Early Learning

**SUBJECT: HB 499, HD 1 – RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM.**

**Hearing Date:** February 28, 2017

**Time:** 3:00 p.m.

**Location:** Conference Room 308

**Purpose of Bill:** RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM. Repeals the priority given by the preschool open doors program to children who are not eligible to attend public school kindergarten in the calendar year in which they turn five years of age because their birth date occurs after the kindergarten eligibility date.

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION:** The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) **supports** HB 499, HD 1 with recommendations for amendments.

With respect to the definition of "at risk," which has been addressed through HB 498, HD 1, EOEL has proposed that consideration be given to include children whose family income is no more than three hundred percent of the federal poverty level. To maintain consistency within the early childhood system of care and education, EOEL respectfully requests that the language in HB 499, Section 1, lines 3-11 be revised to read, "Subject to the availability of funds, the program shall serve four-year-old children, with priority extended to: (1) Children who are not eligible to attend public school kindergarten in the calendar year in which they turn five years of age because their birth date after the kindergarten eligibility date pursuant to section 302A-411; (2) 4-year-old children; and (3) underserved or at-risk children with priority for those whose family income is below two-hundred and fifty percent of the federal poverty level."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



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

February 28, 2017

TO: The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 499 HD1 – RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 28, 2017, 3:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this measure provided that passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities in the Executive Budget and existing operations. DHS offers comments.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of HB 499 HD1 is to repeal the priority given by the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program to children who are not eligible to attend public school kindergarten in the calendar year in which they turn 5 years of age because their birth date occurs after the kindergarten eligibility date. Committee on Education amended the measure by: (1) specifying that priority for the Preschool Open Doors Program will be extended to four-year-old children who are underserved or at-risk and whose family income is at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL); and (2) defecting the effective date.

Although, the Committee on Education clarified the priority for those children whose families are at or below 250 percent of the FPL, DHS has additional requests for clarification and suggested amendments.

Act 169, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2013, established the POD program as the statewide school readiness program. POD is codified at section 346-181, Hawaii Revised

Statutes (HRS). POD program assists low and moderate income families who are least able to afford preschool. POD child care subsidies help families with assistance to pay for the cost of attending licensed group child care centers and group child care homes (i.e. preschools). Children benefit with the opportunity to attend an early learning program to improve kindergarten readiness.

HB499 HD1 creates confusion by defining "underserved" or "at-risk children" by referencing the definitions in section 302L-1, HRS. Section 302L-1, HRS, is part of chapter 302L, HRS, which established the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). Section 302L-1, HRS, definition of "at-risk children" is used for the EOEL public pre-kindergarten program in public preschools and includes children who are eligible for special education services. POD services are not provided to a child who attends a Department of Education (DOE) pre-kindergarten classroom or special education classroom as provided by Part B, of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and DOE does not charge families for public pre-kindergarten or special education services. POD was established, in part, to provide children with access to school readiness services at preschools.

DHS asks that the proposed phrase in HB 499 HD1 "as defined in section 302L-1" be deleted from the measure at lines 10 and 11. By deleting this phrase, it will be clear that the population to be served will continue to be those children from low- and moderate-income families whose family incomes are at or below two-hundred fifty percent of federal poverty level, as defined by Chapter 799, Preschool Open Doors Program, §17-799, et seq., HAR.

Because of the proposed reference to the definition of underserved to the EOEL section, it is unclear if the Legislature also intend to allow four-year olds from families with a higher income limit to be eligible for the POD program, as the EOEL section includes families at or below 300 percent of FPL. If this is also the intent, DHS respectfully suggests that the amendment be reflected in the POD statute, section 346-181 (a), HRS, as follows:

- (a) There is established within the department a school readiness program to be known as the preschool open doors program within the department's child care assistance program. The program shall:

- (1) Provide access to school readiness services that address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development;
- (2) Require each provider to conduct school readiness assessments;
- (3) Give priority to children from low- and moderate-income families **whose family incomes are at or below three-hundred per cent of the federal poverty level ;**
- (4) Prepare children for school through either of the State's two official languages.

For the committee's reference §17-799-2, HAR, provides POD with the definition of "special populations referral" that includes a child that:

- (1) Has a physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional health condition that is outside of the normal range;
- (2) Meets the state department of health criteria for environmental risk as defined in HRS §321-351;
- (3) Resides in a Limited English Proficiency household; or
- (4) Is homeless.

Additionally, income eligibility requirements for the POD program are described in Chapter 799, Preschool Open Doors Program, §17-799, et seq., HAR.

DHS agrees with the proposal in HB 499 HD1 to delete the priority given to children who are not eligible to attend public school kindergarten in the calendar year in which they turn five years of age because their birth date occurs after the kindergarten eligibility date.<sup>1</sup> If all other parts of section 346-181, HRS, remained the same, DHS does not currently anticipate too many problems with implementing such a change.

Under HB 499 HD1, POD services would continue to serve only children in the year prior to their eligibility for kindergarten entry. DHS agrees that priority services for POD should be for all children who are underserved or at-risk in the year prior to their eligibility for kindergarten entry, regardless if they are "late-born" or not.

Also, the DHS is currently moving the state's regulated child care system into compliance with recent amendments to the Child Care and Development Block Grant

(CCDBG) Act of 2014, Public Law 113-186. The CCDBG provides federally funded support for Hawaii's statewide child care licensing infrastructure and DHS child care subsidies under Child Care Connection Hawaii. The CCDBG Act made significant changes to health and safety requirements as it re-authorized the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, to provide block grants for child care regulation (i.e. licensing), quality support services, and federal child care subsidies. Hawaii receives \$22 million per year from these federal CCDBG grants. To maintain the level of federal funding, complying with federal law changes to increase health and safety of children in child care is the paramount focus.

Regarding current program operations, POD is accepting applications until March 31, 2017 for services in the 2017-2018 POD year. If HB 499 HD 1 were to pass as drafted with the Legislature's expectation of implementation effective FY 2018, given the current program demands and compliance efforts for continued receipt of the federal CCDBG funds, and changes to administrative rules and operations, including modifications to its IT system, which would be required in response to passage of the bill, DHS requests additional time and a delay of the effective date to July 1, 2018 or later.

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Act 178, SLH 2012, repealed junior kindergarten programs at the end of the 2013-2014 school year, and beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, required students to be at least five years of age on July 31 of the school year in order to attend kindergarten.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



CATHERINE PAYNE  
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII  
**STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION**  
**(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)**

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>  
1111 Bishop Street, Suite 516, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

---

**TO:** Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

**FROM:** Sione Thompson, Executive Director  
State Public Charter School Commission

**SUBJECT: HB 499, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM**  
**Hearing Date:** February 28, 2017  
**Time:** 3:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Conference Room 308

**Purpose of Bill:** Repeals the priority given by the preschool open doors program to children who are not eligible to attend public school kindergarten in the calendar year in which they turn five years of age because their birth date occurs after the kindergarten eligibility date.

---

**STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION’S POSTION:** The State Public Charter School Commission **supports** HB 499, H.D. 1 – Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program

The State Public Charter School Commission recognizes the importance of high quality early childhood education. We support the measure and its amendments as it will assist the state in providing early childhood experiences for our children.

For these reason, the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission respectfully requests that the committee pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



## KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

### House Committee on Finance

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Date: February 28, 2017

Where: State Capitol Room 308

#### TESTIMONY

By Ka'ano'i Walk  
Kamehameha Schools

To: Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and Members of the Committee

RE: **HB 499 HD1, Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program**

E ka Luna Ho'omaluku, ka Hope Luna Ho'omaluku a me nā Lālā o ke Kōmike Waiwai o ka Hale o nā Lunamaka'āinana, 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.

HB 499 HD1, relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program repeals the priority given by the preschool open doors program to children who are not eligible to attend public school kindergarten in the calendar year in which they turn five years of age because their birth date occurs after the kindergarten eligibility date. We are writing in **support** of this measure.

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.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an organization striving to advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership.

‘A‘ohe hana nui ke alu ‘ia. No task is too large when we all work together! Mahalo nui.

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2017 9:59 AM  
**To:** FINTestimony  
**Cc:** jeannine808@gmail.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB499 on Feb 28, 2017 15:00PM\*

**HB499**

Submitted on: 2/27/2017

Testimony for FIN on Feb 28, 2017 15:00PM in Conference Room 308

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jeannine Souki	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)



February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Sharon Har, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Education

From: Jasmine Morisako-Smith  
Bachelors of Social Work, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa  
[jms77@hawaii.edu](mailto:jms77@hawaii.edu)

Subject: HB 499 HD 1 – Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program

Hearing: Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 3:00pm  
Conference Room 309, Hawaii State Capitol

In strong opposition for H.B. 499 H.D. 1 relating to Pre-School Open Doors Program,

My name is Jasmine Morisako-Smith and I am a graduate student attending University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I have my bachelors in social work and am currently working on my masters. I am writing in opposition of H.B. 499 H.D. 1 relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program. The purpose of this bill is to repeal the priority given by the Preschool Open Doors program to children who are not eligible to attend public school kindergarten in the calendar year in which they turn five years of age because their birth date occurs after the kindergarten eligibility date.

I am a single mother at age 22 but I am also a student and an employee at a restaurant. With all the tasks that I have as a working student, it was very hard for me to find financially affordable care for my three-year old child. Being from the Big Island, I did not have a lot of family here on Oahu and therefore was almost forced to drop out of school because I could not find care for my son and he was too young to meet the eligibility of the kindergarten school age.

Age should not play a factor into whether a child can or cannot receive an education. Research has clearly proven how vital it is for children to have an early education. Early

education allows children to interact with other children their age and helps them to excel both academically and socially.

Due to my personal experience and knowledge, I better understand the need for childcare and education for children who are not eligible to attend public school kindergarten in the calendar year in which they turn five years of age because their birthdate occurs after the kindergarten eligibility date. I believe children should be entitled to a fair education regardless of their age. Therefore I strongly oppose H.B. 499 H.D. 1. Thank you for the opportunity and consideration to testify on this matter.



February 27, 2017

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

From: Karen Worthington, Project Coordinator  
Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: HB499-HD1 – Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program  
**Hawaii State Capitol, Room 308, February 28, 2017, 3:00 PM**

**Position: Action Strategy is writing to provide comment on HB499-HD1 Relating to Preschool Open Doors Program**

Dear Representative Luke, Representative Cullen and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Early Childhood Action Strategy, a public private collaborative that recognizes the strength of communities and works across sectors to increase the number of young children in Hawaii who are born healthy, developing on track, ready for school when they enter kindergarten, and proficient learners by third grade.

Action Strategy is providing comment on HB499-HD1 to express its support of the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program, which allows families with low and low-moderate incomes to afford a high quality early learning setting for their children and increases the possibility that parents can work or pursue higher education or training.

Action Strategy respectfully asks this committee to modify the bill to expand eligibility for the Preschool Open Doors program to three-year-old children and to allocate additional funds to allow more families access to this essential support for young children. When Preschool Open Doors started in 1990, this state-funded program served three- and four-year-olds from qualifying low-income families. However, in recent years the program was changed to only serve four-year-old children.

The expansion of this program to include three-year-old children is critical to supporting Hawaii's

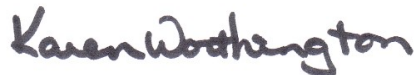
families with young children. The average cost of child care in Hawaii is approximately \$8,040 per year. For most families, child care is their second highest expense after paying for housing. Access to stimulating, safe preschool or child care is not possible for many low and low-moderate income families without POD subsidies.

High Quality Early Learning Programs are a critical component of Hawaii's early childhood system because high quality early learning programs:

- support parents and families in nurturing their children
- help track children's development and recommend when screening should occur for developmental delays or developmental differences
- help parents and children benefit from interventions that follow developmental screenings
- help families identify needed community resources
- allow parents to work or pursue their education
- promote the social and emotional development of young children
- prepare children to enter school as kindergarteners.

Action Strategy is committed to ensuring Hawaii's young children are healthy, safe and ready to learn and expanding POD to reach more families and younger children supports that vision. Please feel free to contact me for additional information. I can be reached at 808-214-9336 or [karen@clnhawaii.org](mailto:karen@clnhawaii.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Worthington". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Karen Worthington, JD



**LATE**

**TO:** Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the House Committee on Finance  
**FROM:** Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)  
**DATE/LOCATION:** February 28, 2017; 3:00 p.m., Conference Room 308

**RE: TESTIMONY TO PROVIDE COMMENTS FOR HB 499 HD 1 – RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM**

**We wanted to provide comments to the bill: HB 499 HD 1– Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program.** We believe that the intent of this bill is to expand the access to the Preschool Open Doors Program to serve more underserved or at-risk children. There are other bills that address the expansion of the age eligibility being heard in this year’s legislature. We do express some concern regarding the removal of the priority given to those keiki who are not eligible to attend kindergarten in the calendar in which they turn five years of age. Participation in early learning and development programs for school readiness have immediate and long-term benefits that include higher levels of educational achievement, reduced homelessness, reduced crime, reduced substance abuse, improved health, and overall better social and economic well being. The first 5 years of a child’s life lays the foundation for future development. Access to programs at an early age, especially the year prior to kindergarten, will help prepare the child for future success.

There are approximately 8,000 keiki in Hawaii between the ages of 3-5 living in poverty. The majority of these keiki do not have the financial means to support opportunities that Preschool Open Doors would fund.

There are important secondary impacts with Preschool Open Doors. For example, these funds allow parents to have the time to find work and earn wages to support their family. It is a key component to our war on intergenerational poverty.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii’s not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 18,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 16 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **with comments of HB 499 HD 1**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or [rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org](mailto:rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.



**LATE**

February 26, 2017

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair  
Committee on Finance

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

Re: HB 499 HD1 – Relating to Preschool Open Doors Program  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 308, February 28, 2017, 3:00 PM

---

On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), we are writing to provide comments on HB 499 HD 1 – Relating to Preschool Open Doors Program

HCAN strongly supports the intention to expand the Preschool Open Doors program to at-risk and underserved children by expanding the definition. We respectfully request that the committee amend this bill to expand the scope of children served to include at-risk 3 AND 4 year olds and increase the appropriation for this critical program for families.

When Preschool Open Doors started in 1990, this state-funded program served 3 & 4 year olds from qualifying low-income families. However, the program was significantly reduced in 2012 and 2013. Although services and funding for the program increased in the last year, the program has not been restored to the needed service levels.

Hawaii ranks second to last out of the most affordable states in the nation. Childcare is generally the second largest expense in family budgets after housing cost, averaging about \$8,040 per year. For children under two years that cost is generally much higher. The average POD subsidy was \$540/month to families with a median annual income of \$33,000 in 2015.

As of February 1, 2016, 2,213 applications were received for the Preschool Open Doors program, which provides subsidies for tuition assistance for families earning up to 142% over poverty line. As of the same date, only 1,156 children were being served. This is an opportunity to improve the chances for Hawaii's children to succeed by increasing the reach of the program.

By expanding the definition of at-risk and underserved, it will provide more low- to moderate-income parents, especially single parents, the opportunity to pursue higher education, training, or work as well as better prepare students to succeed in school. Preschool Open Doors

promotes cognitive, social, and emotional development of young children and school readiness in our state, where only 14.5% of children display comprehensive readiness for kindergarten.

For these reasons, HCAN respectfully requests that the committee vote to pass this bill with amendments.

HCAN is committed to building a unified voice advocating for Hawaii's children by improving their safety, health, and education. 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 2017 Hawaii Children's Policy Agenda, which can be accessed at <http://www.hawaii-can.org/2017policyagenda>.

**LATE**

To:

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair

Rep. Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

Committee on Finance

From: Ashley Cachero

Re: RE: TESTIMONY TO PROVIDE COMMENTS FOR HB 499 – RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM

Dear Chair Rep. Sylvia Luke and Vice Chair Rep. Ty J.K. Cullen , and Members of the Committees:

Hello, my name is Ashley Cachero. I'm a single mother to my precious five-year old daughter, I'm also a Master's student in the Myron B, Thompson School of Social Work at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I would not be able to have my daughter in preschool and attend my internship and school if it were not for Preschool Open Doors.

With respect to House Bill 499, while I support and understand the intent of this bill is to expand the access to the Preschool Open Doors Program to serve more undeserved or at risk children, I do not agree with the removal of priority given to children who are not eligible to attend kindergarten in the calendar in which they turn five years of age. This past year my daughter turned five after the kindergarten eligibility date, if it were not for Preschool Open Doors financial assistance, my daughter would not have the opportunity to participate in early learning and development programs through her school that prepares her for her future. "The first 5 years of a child's life lays the foundation for future development. Access to programs at an early age, especially the year prior to kindergarten , will help prepare the child for future success." (PATCH testimony)

Thank you for allowing me to testify with comments for House Bill 499.

Ashley Cachero