

# **HB499 HD1**

Measure Title: RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM.

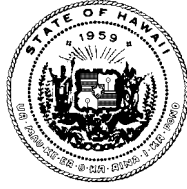
Report Title: Preschool Open Doors Program; At-risk Children; Underserved Children

Description: 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. Extends priority to underserved or at-risk children; provided that priority is given to children whose family income is at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level. (HB499 HD1)

Current Referral: HMS/EDU, WAM

Introducer(s): TAKUMI, OHNO

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT  
DIRECTOR

BRIDGET HOLTHUS  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

March 20, 2017

TO: The Honorable Senator Josh Green, Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

TO: The Honorable Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

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

Hearing: Monday, March 20, 2017, 2:45 p.m.  
Conference Room 016, 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 and requests an effective date of July 1, 2018 or later to give DHS sufficient time to make administrative and operational changes that may result if the measure passes.

**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.

The House 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.

DHS appreciates the House Committee on Education's amendments that clarified the priority for those children whose families are at or below 250 percent of the FPL. DHS request additional clarification, and suggests 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.

DHS requests additional clarification as continued reference in (b) to definitions of "at-risk children" and "underserved children" as defined by section 302L-1, Hawaii Revised Statute (HRS), creates an apparent conflict with §17-799-2, Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR), which provides POD with the definition of "special populations referral" that a child does not qualify for the Department of Education special education program. Section 302L-1 includes in the definition of "at-risk children" children "who are eligible for special education services." If a child is eligible for special education services, the child would receive those services through the 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 so families would not require subsidies.

DHS respectfully suggests, for further clarity and efficiency, that the legislature provide the definitions of "at-risk children" and "underserved children" directly in section 346-181, HRS, rather than referring to definitions contained in section 302L-1, or change lines 10 through 14 as follows:

(2) Underserved or at-risk children[], **as defined by rules adopted by the department;** provided that priority shall be given to children whose family income is at or below two hundred fifty per cent of the federal poverty level.

For the committee's reference §17-799-2, Hawaii Administrative Rules (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.

If the Legislature also intends to allow four-year olds from families with a higher income limit, at or below 300 percent of the FPL, to be eligible for the POD program, 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; [~~and~~]
  - (4) Prepare children for school through either of the State's two official languages[~~;~~]; and
  - (5) Require that the family income is at or below three hundred per cent of the federal poverty level to receive services.**

Waiting lists for POD subsidies may be a potential impact with expanding those eligible based upon an increased FPL.

Regarding current program operations, POD is accepting applications until March 31, 2017 for services in the 2017-2018 POD year. If HB 499 HD1 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 Child Care Development Block Grant 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 request that the effective date be July 1, 2018 or later.

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



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

March 17, 2017

**TO:** Senator Josh Green, Chair  
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair  
Senator Kaiiali'i Kahele, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education

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

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

**Hearing Date:** March 20, 2017  
**Time:** 2:45 p.m.  
**Location:** Conference Room 016

**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 and defers to the Department of Human Services for any suggested amendments.

EOEL offers comments on HB 499, HD1. The highest cost of raising a child is the cost of child care. In Hawaii, married parents with 2 children who live at the poverty line pay 107% of their income for child care. The cost of care for 2 children is nearly 2.5 times higher than the annual cost of college tuition at a four-year college. The Preschool Open Doors program has been instrumental in supporting families who are in need of child care.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



CATHERINE PAYNE  
CHAIRPERSON

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

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>  
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Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

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**FOR:** HB 499, H.D. 1 Relating to the preschool open doors program

**DATE:** Monday, March 20, 2017

**TIME:** 2:45 p.m.

**COMMITTEES:** Senate Committee on Human Services  
Senate Committee on Education

**ROOM:** Conference Room 016

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

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Chairs Green and Kidani, and Vice Chairs Chang and Kahele and members of the Committees:

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 this 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.



## Native Hawaiian Education Council

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March 19, 2017

Senator Josh Green, Chair  
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair  
State of Hawai'i Senate  
Committee on Human Services

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Ka`aialii Kahele, Vice Chair  
State of Hawai'i Senate  
Committee on Education

Via: Electronic Upload - [HMStestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:HMStestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov);  
[EDUtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:EDUtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)

RE: **HB499, HD1 re: RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM.**

Aloha mai kakou,

The Native Hawaiian Education Council (NHEC or the Council) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** **HB499, HD1 re: RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM** based on our:

- A. **Support of the Legislature's actions to:** Extend priority to underserved or at-risk children; provided that priority is given to children whose family income is at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level. Such a priority would provide pre-school programming to the most vulnerable of children and families.
- B. **Platform and priorities to:** Engage in early learning planning and implementation work, providing access to greater numbers of children and families to pre-school.

The Native Hawaiian Education Council was established in 1994 under the federal Native Hawaiian Education Act. The Council is charged with coordinating, assessing and reporting and making recommendations on the effectiveness of existing education programs for Native Hawaiians, the state of present Native Hawaiian education efforts, and improvements that may be made to existing programs, policies, and procedures to improve the educational attainment of Native Hawaiians.





Josh Green & Stanley Chang  
Michelle Kidani & Ka`aialii Kahele  
March 19, 2017  
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Please feel free to contact the Council's Executive Director, Dr. Sylvia Hussey, directly via e-mail ([sylvia@nhec.org](mailto:sylvia@nhec.org)), office (808.523.6432) or mobile (808.221.5477) telephone with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa M. Watkins-Victorino". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Lisa M. Watkins-Victorino, Chair

cc: Policy & Advocacy and Executive Committees and staff





March 19, 2017

To: Senator Josh Green, Chair  
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair  
Committee on Human Service

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Kaiiali'i Kahele, Vice Chair  
Committee on Education

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

Re: **HB 499 HD1 – Relating to Preschool Open Doors Program**  
**Hawaii State Capitol, Room 016, March 20, 2017, 2:45 PM**

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

HCAN supports the intention to expand the Preschool Open Doors program to at-risk and underserved children by expanding the definition. 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.**

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>.



**TO:** Chair Green and Kidani, Vice Chair Chang and Kahele, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services and the Senate Committee on Education

**FROM:** Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)

**DATE/LOCATION:** March 20, 2017; 2:45 p.m., Conference Room 016

**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.