



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 678 H.D.1 S.D. 1
RELATING TO HEALTH**

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date: April 03, 2019

Room Number: 211

1 **Fiscal Implications:** There are no fiscal implications for the Department of Health (DOH).

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health **strongly supports** this measure.

3 This bill mandates the reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results to improve
4 identification and follow-up of infants who are deaf or hard of hearing. The purpose of HB678,
5 HD1, SD1 is to ensure that diagnostic audiologic reports related to follow-up of newborns who
6 did not pass newborn hearing screening, or when an infant's hearing status changes, are provided
7 to the Department of Health. This issue is especially important since state data show that the
8 incidence of infants who are born deaf or hard of hearing is about twice the incidence in other
9 states.

10 Newborn hearing screening is mandated by Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §321-361 to 363
11 (2001) as a public health screening program that helps deaf or hard of hearing children reach
12 their developmental milestones and be language ready for school. The national standards for
13 early hearing detection and intervention are screening by 1 month of age, identification by 3
14 months, and enrollment in early intervention services by 6 months. Many studies have shown
15 that the 1-3-6 goal results in children who have better vocabulary outcomes, reach their
16 milestones at the right time, and are language ready for school.

17 In 2017, approximately 170 newborns did not pass newborn hearing screening. Without access to
18 all the diagnostic audiologic evaluation results on these newborns, the DOH Newborn Hearing

1 Screening Program (NHSP) does not know what happened to 44 (26%) of these newborns. This
2 means that the NHSP does not know if it needs to follow-up with the families to facilitate
3 diagnostic testing or entry into early intervention services, or just document that the newborn is
4 not deaf or hard of hearing.

5 In addition, infants are not receiving timely evaluations. Of the 126/170 infants who received
6 diagnostic audiologic evaluations, only 100 (57%) received an evaluation before 3 months of
7 age. Timely and consistent reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results will allow the
8 program staff to identify, contact, and provide support to families of infants who need an
9 evaluation before 3 months of age.

10 The missing diagnostic audiologic evaluation results also cause great delay for entry into much
11 needed early intervention services for the infants who are deaf or hard of hearing. In 2017, 65
12 infants were diagnosed with permanent hearing loss, but only 15/38 (39%) were enrolled in early
13 intervention by 6 months of age. Timely reporting and referral to early intervention will increase
14 the percentage of deaf and hard of hearing infants receiving appropriate early intervention
15 services to develop oral and/or sign language communication.

16 Mandating the reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results for the newborns who do not
17 pass newborn hearing screening will help Hawaii meet the national 1-3-6 goal to help children
18 who are deaf or hard of hearing be language ready for school.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

20 **Offered Amendment:** None.



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
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April 2, 2019

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Lauren Moriguchi, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: H.B. No. 678, S.D. 1 – RELATING TO HEALTH
Hearing Date: April 3, 2019
Time: 10:25 a.m.
Location: Room 211

Bill Description: Amends the newborn hearing screening statute to mandate reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results to improve hearing follow-up of infants. Updates definitions and terminology.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

Good morning. I am Lauren Moriguchi, Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL is in support of H.B. 678, S.D. 1.

EOEL is statutorily responsible for the development of the State's early childhood system that shall ensure a spectrum of high-quality development and learning opportunities for children throughout the state, from prenatal care until the time they enter kindergarten, with priority given to underserved or at-risk children.

This bill mandates reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results to improve identification and follow-up of infants who are deaf or hard of hearing. At this critical stage of development, providing follow-up support for families of these very young children is essential. Serve-and-return interactions between adults and young children are critical to the architecture of the brain, which has lasting impact on children's development and learning. The deprivation of the verbal or non-verbal language (through which these interactions occur) negatively impacts social-emotional competence and cognitive development, in addition to language and literacy skills. Consequently, ensuring responsible follow-up for infants who are deaf or hard-of-hearing is vital to establishing a strong foundation for the young child, one that his or her future years will be built upon. To ensure the necessary follow-up and follow-through of support services for families, and hence for young children, identification is key.

We defer to the Department of Health regarding the other merits of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration, and for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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April 3, 2019

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

House Bill 678, HD1, SD1 - Relating to Health

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 678, HD1, SD1 – Relating to Health that amends the Newborn Hearing Screening statute to mandate reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results to improve hearing follow-up of infants and to update definitions and terminology.

The sooner a parent is aware of hearing difficulties that their child has, the more advantageous it is for the child. Spoken language is learned through hearing and making appropriate responses for the child to develop some form of language. The child's hearing difficulties need to be identified and addressed as early as possible and this bill allows for early screening and evaluation to be conducted and for infants to be enrolled in early intervention services. Language development is a critical factor in the child's ability to maximize socialization skills.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Jackson
for FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director