

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
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Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 987 H.D. 1
RELATING TO HEARING AND VISION PROGRAM

REPRESENTATIVE SYLVIA LUKE, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: 2/26/2021

Room Number: Via Videoconference

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

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department **strongly supports** this measure, which is part of the
3 Governor's Administrative Package, to amend Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §321-101 to
4 establish recommended standards for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener
5 training, and data collection and reporting.

6 The DOH recognizes that the early identification of hearing and vision loss, with appropriate
7 follow-up services, is essential for the development of children's language and communication
8 skills needed for learning in school.

9 HRS §321-101 mandates a hearing and vision program for school children to be conducted by
10 the DOH. This program was discontinued in 1995 due to budget reductions and with the
11 assumption that primary care providers will do the hearing and vision screening. The DOH does
12 not have the funding or staff resources to reinstate this program. Currently, a DOH audiologist
13 provides training and consultation to community organizations on hearing and vision screening
14 protocols and tools.

15 Improvement in hearing and vision screening for children is needed. Providers and community
16 programs vary in their protocols and training for screenings and follow-up. Screeners vary in
17 their training and skills for conducting screenings. Hawaii data from the National Survey of
18 Children's Health show that, compared with other states, Hawaii ranks low in rate of vision

1 screening of 61.6% (35th of 50 states for all ages of children). Although newborns receive
2 hearing screening, there is a need to identify children who develop hearing loss after the newborn
3 period due to late onset or progressive hearing loss.

4 The proposed amendment to HRS §321-101 will allow the Department to set recommended
5 standards based on national guidelines and best practices for hearing and vision screening and
6 follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement. A statewide screening
7 protocol will ensure that all organizations performing screening are using tools, screening
8 procedures, and referral criteria based on evidence and best practice.

9 The DOH will use existing staff to support the proposed Hearing and Vision Program. The DOH
10 will convene an advisory committee with professional, state, and community members to assist
11 the DOH in developing recommended protocols for hearing and vision screening and follow-up,
12 screener training, and data collection and reporting. Training will be provided at no cost to the
13 community organizations.

14 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



ELIZABETH A. CHAR, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
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TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
February 26, 2021

The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
House Committee on Finance
The Thirty-First Legislature
Regular Session of 2021
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Luke and Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: HB0987 HD1 – Relating to Hearing and Vision Program

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities **STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB0987 HD1** which amends the hearing and vision program statute to increase the early identification of children with hearing or vision loss, by establishing consistent protocols for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement.

Early identification of hearing and vision loss is imperative in order to provide appropriate follow-up services to a child for the development of the child's language and communication skills. These skills are essential for the child to learn in school.

The Department of Health would have to amend Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §321- 101 in order to establish the recommended standards based on national guidelines and best practices for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement. A statewide screening protocol will ensure that all organizations performing screening are using tools, screening procedures, and referral criteria based on evidence and best practice. As such, the Council respectfully defers to the Department of Health for further guidance.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of **HB0987 HD1**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

February 25, 2021

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

FROM: Lauren Moriguchi, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: H.B. No. 987 H.D. 1 – RELATING TO VISION AND HEARING
SCREENING
Hearing Date: Friday February 26, 2021
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Location: Videoconference

Bill Description: Amends the hearing and vision program statute to increase the early identification of children with hearing or vision loss, by establishing consistent protocols for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement. Effective 7/1/2060.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

Good afternoon. I am Lauren Moriguchi, Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL supports H.B. 987 H.D. 1 and defers to DOH as it relates to vision and hearing screening.

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.

Early identification of hearing and vision loss, coupled with appropriate follow-up services, provides the resources and support needed for families of children experiencing vision and hearing issues. These supports are essential for children's language and communication development, and learning throughout childhood and beyond.

The National Survey of Children's Health demonstrates that Hawaii ranks low in rate and vision screening compared to other states. Although newborns receive hearing screening, there is a need to identify children who develop hearing loss after the newborn period.

This bill will allow the Department of Health to set recommended standards based on national guidelines and best practices for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement.

As we work to increase access to quality early learning opportunities for our keiki, early identification and treatment of vision and hearing problems support children in their readiness for learning, school performance, and academic achievement. Timely and consistent screening will allow program staff to identify and provide the necessary support to families of infants who may be impacted by vision and/or hearing concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



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

Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Representative Luke, Chair
Representative Cullen, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Re: **HB 987 HD1 Relating to Hearing and Vision Programs**
11AM, February 26, 2021

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and committee members,

On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of House Bill 987 HD1**, relating to hearing and vision program.

Early identification of hearing loss is important to ensure children and their caregivers are provided the supports and care they need. Hearing loss can occur throughout childhood and therefore, it is critical that screenings are on-going and that there are established evidence-based practices for the medical providers and personnel administering the screenings. House bill 987 HD1 requires the Department of Health to set recommended standards for training, certifications, and qualifications of personnel who conduct hearing and vision screening and it also allows the Department to set standards for ages or grades of screenings, ensuring consistent practice for all children across the state.

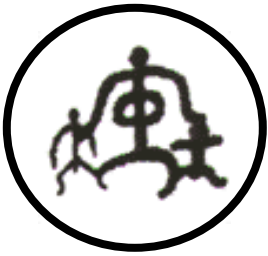
Establishing protocols for hearing and visions screening and follow-up and screener training will strengthen the state's on-going work. It will also help make the system more equitable for all children. In the study, *Missed Opportunities: Do States Require Screening of Children for Health Conditions that Interfere with Learning*¹, children most likely to be impacted by health barriers to learning (which include vision problems and hearing loss) are those living in poverty². Additionally, data collection and reporting is necessary to understanding if current systems of practice are meeting their goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House bill 987 HD1.

Kathleen Algire
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

¹ Gracy, D., Fabian, A., Basch, C. H., Scigliano, M., MacLean, S. A., MacKenzie, R. K., & Redlener, I. E. (2018). Missed opportunities: Do states require screening of children for health conditions that interfere with learning?. *PloS one*, 13(1), e0190254. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0190254>

² Delaney Gracy, Anupa Fabian, Virginia Roncaglione, Katie Savage and Irwin Redlener, *Health Barriers to Learning: The Prevalence and Educational Consequences in Disadvantaged Children* (Children's Health Fund, 2016)



HAWAI‘I EARLY INTERVENTION COORDINATING COUNCIL

1010 Richards Street * Suite 811 * Honolulu Hawai‘i 96813

Phone: 808-594-0000 Fax: 808-594-0015

Date: February 24, 2021

To: House Committee on Health, Human Services & Homelessness
Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
Representative Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair

From: Bobbie-Jo Moniz-Tadeo, Chair of the Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council

Re: SUPPORT – HB987, Relating to the Hearing and Vision Program

The Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council (HEICC) is the federally mandated advisory council in Hawaii which is required by state law ([Hawaii Revised Statutes §321-353](#)) and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Part C refers to early intervention services for children birth to age three. The HEICC works in collaboration with the Early Intervention Section advising and assisting the Department in the development and implementation of policies that constitute a statewide system, including identification of sources or fiscal and other support for services for young children.

On behalf of the HEICC, I submit this testimony in **support** of HB 987, which amends the hearing and vision program statute to increase the early identification of children with hearing or vision loss, by establishing consistent protocols for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training and data collection for quality improvement.

More importantly, HB 987 will support children and families in receiving the support needed for a child’s development such as:

- Timely reporting of diagnostic information helps to identify deaf or hard of hearing infants early
- Early identification and referral for intervention services is important to ensure deaf/hard of hearing children can reach developmental milestones and be language ready for school
- The reporting of audiologic evaluation results helps to meet the national 1-3-6 screening, diagnostic and early intervention goals for newborn hearing screening.

HEICC supports this measure and thanks you for your time and consideration in this measure.



LATE

Date: February 10, 2021

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

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for HB987, Relating to the Hearing and Vision Program

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide government-nongovernment collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners are working to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS supports passage of HB 987, which amends the hearing and vision program statute to increase the early identification of children with hearing or vision loss, by establishing consistent protocols for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement.

ECAS supports this measure because of the evidence that:

- Timely reporting of diagnostic information helps to identify deaf or hard of hearing infants early
- Early identification and referral for intervention services is important to ensure deaf/hard of hearing children can reach developmental milestones and be language ready for school
- The reporting of audiologic evaluation results helps to meet the national 1-3-6 screening, diagnostic and early intervention goals for newborn hearing screening.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.



To: Representative Sylvia Luke
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen

From: Kristina Fuentes, President
Hawai'i Speech-Language-Hearing Association
P.O. Box 235888 Honolulu, HI 96823-3516
(808) 528-4742
hsha808@gmail.com

LATE

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB987: Relating to Hearing and Vision Screening

The Hawai'i Speech-Language Hearing Association (HSHA) is a professional, non-profit organization of speech-language pathologists and audiologists that is nationally recognized by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Our mission is to promote excellence in speech-language pathology and audiology through professional development, advocacy, and leadership to provide education and quality services that embrace the diversity of those we serve. We **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB 987 to amend the hearing and vision screening program statute to increase early identification of children with hearing or vision loss.

Children with hearing loss fall behind their peers in speech, language, social and cognitive skills. Early identification of hearing loss is critical to prevent future academic and social challenges. Children with vision loss are likely to fall behind their peers in reading. Early identification is necessary to implement interventions as early as possible.

Research shows that early identification of hearing loss in the first 6 months of life leads to better speech, language, and social development compared to children whose hearing loss was identified between 7-30 months (Yoghinaga 2003).

Please join us in support of our keiki with the passage of HB987.

We, the members of HSHA, thank you for the opportunity to testify and share our support for the passage of HB987.

Sincerely,
Kristina Fuentes, MS CCC-SLP
HSHA President 2020-2021

Yoshinaga-Itano C (2003) From screening to early identification and intervention:
Discovering predictors to successful outcomes for children with significant hearing loss. J
Deaf Stud Deaf Educ 8: 11-30.