

April 8, 2022

To: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Morcado Kim , Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Education Committee

From: Robert G Peters, Chair,  
Early Learning Board

Re: **GM 689 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Early Learning Board,  
Gubernatorial Nominee, Mei Ou, for a term to expire 06-30-2024.**

Monday, April 11, 2022, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference, 3:00 pm.

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Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and Committee Members:

I am offering this testimony in strong support of the confirmation of the Governor's nomination of Mei Ou to serve a term on the Early Learning Board (ELB) to expire on 06-30-2024.

Mei Ou's educational background and professional experience qualify her to serve as a member of the Early Learning Board (ELB). Her degrees focused on early learning, child development and family resources. She served as Assistant Director and Lead Infant Caregiver for Rainbow Schools before joining PATCH (People Attentive to Children) where she held a number of positions related to quality care, training of child care givers and educators and program manager for the USDA Food Program. She is, consequently, very conversant with the early care and learning community, its complexity and needs.

Currently, Mei holds the position of Support Manager for Family Hui Hawaii. In this role, she coaches early learning teachers and daycare providers ensuring that families and children are receiving the care and resources needed to support well-being. Families are the focus of her efforts as Mei works to support providers to effectively interact and engage families as their child's first teachers. Mei comes highly recommended from the current occupant of the Parent seat on the Board as someone who will not only be a strong representative of the parents/family voice but also will appreciate the perspectives of the diverse membership of the Board.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer strong support for Mei Ou to serve as the parent representative on the Early Learning Board.

Robert G. Peters, Chair  
Early Learning Board

**GM-689**

Submitted on: 4/8/2022 8:32:06 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/11/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Traci Garma	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

**Dear Senate President Kouchi and Members of the Senate:**

**Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to read/listen to my letter of support for Mei Ou for Parent Representative on the Early Learning Board (ELB) to expire on June 30, 2024.**

**I have the pleasure of knowing Me Oui for over 5 years. I first met Mei when she was a Program Manager for People Attentive to Children (PATCH) she was responsible for the Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP). Mei's job as a Program Manager was to oversee the CACFP program and its many different facets of responsibilities such as budgeting, training, quality reviews of program, family engagement, community outreach, reimbursement of money and many more responsibilities. Mei and I attended many meetings in person, on-line, and on calls. I was able to see how passionate Mei was/is about children, families, staff, and community having access to quality, nutritious, and affordable food for children and families. Oftentimes people in the community would ask Mei for guidance and ideas of how she ran the CACFP program. Mei willingly shared her ideas because she truly knew the importance of making a better community for ALL!**

**Recently, Mei and I's path have brought us together to work together at Family Hui Hawaii. In the past 8 months it's been extremely rewarding to see Mei in action on a professional level. One of Mei's job responsibilities is an early childhood coach to providers in school and home settings. Through these coaching opportunities Mei conducts reflective conversations with teachers. Mei and the teachers create educational plans to build and foster children's development to be discussed and shared with parents. Parents have shared through testimonies how pleased they are with the progress of their children and how supportive they have been through Mei's guidance and support.**

**Another facet of Mei's job responsibilities is to reconfigure and establish an evaluation system to better serve the needs for children, families and community needs. Through this**

**process Mei has gathered all players to a table and reflectively listened to how evaluations were done and how they can streamline the process to make it user friendly for parents.**

**Mei is a hardworking professional and she knows the importance of spending quality time with her son and to take time to do self care for herself.**

**I look forward to many more years of working alongside Mei Ou. Mei is a single mother of her son Makai, and she has her heart set on making a difference for all families. As a Early Learning Board Member she will bring to the table many years of experience in all the areas needed to make a difference in the lives of young children and their families.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of this special person and her family.**

**Sincerely,**

**Traci M. Garma**



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

April 10, 2022

**TO:** The Honorable Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
The Honorable Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education

**FROM:** Coleen Momohara, Interim Director  
Executive Office on Early Learning

**SUBJECT: Measure:** G.M. 689 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND  
CONFIRMATION TO THE EARLY LEARNING BOARD, GUBERNATORIAL  
NOMINEE, MEI OU, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2024.  
**Hearing Date:** Monday, April 11, 2022  
**Time:** 3:00 p.m.  
**Location:** videoconference & Room 229

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support**

Aloha. I am Coleen Momohara, Interim Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL supports the nomination and confirmation of Mei Ou to the Early Learning Board (ELB).

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.

The ELB was established as a governing board through Act 202, SLH 2017, and is responsible for directing the EOEL on how best to meet the developmental and educational needs of children, from prenatal care to entry into kindergarten; providing recommendations to EOEL on improving the quality, availability, and coordination of early learning programs; promoting collaboration across agencies and stakeholders serving young children; and appointing and evaluating the EOEL Director on an annual basis.

Mei Ou is seeking appointment to the ELB as a parent. Mei Ou not only is the parent of a young child, but also has extensive experience working across the system of early learning, including in center-based settings, at the State designated Child Care Resource and Referral Agency and is currently a support manager at Family Hui Hawaii. With her experience and knowledge, Ms. Ou satisfies the requirement of §302 L-1.6 and would be an asset as a member to the ELB.

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



1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1506  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
<https://familyhuihawaii.org>

The Honorable Ronald Kouchi, President  
Members of the Senate Education Committee

April 10, 2022

RE: GM689 Mei Ou

Dear Honorable Members of the Hawai`i State Legislature,

On behalf of Family Hui Hawai`i, I would like to provide our strong support for GM689 appointing MeiQing Ou as the Parent Representative on the Early Learning Board (ELB). As a parenting support organization serving over 1000 parents, caregivers, and children, prenatal to age 5, each year, we see the struggles that families face every day and the difficulty they have in accessing supports and services. We believe that families are strong, that cultural diversity and family choice are strengths that families build on to raise their children.

As families are children's first and most enduring teachers, policymakers must consider and support the needs of children's families around health and early learning. In professional circles where we work with families every day, we may inadvertently overlook the voice of constituents whom we serve. We believe the parent representative of the Early Learning Board ensures that the voice of parents are heard in discussions and decisions that may affect them and their children. At Family Hui Hawai`i, we recognize that all families are unique and that a strong community is built when we respect our differences and learn from each other to support our children. This perspective is important because one individual will not have personally experienced all of the unique challenges that families experience across the state.

We believe Mei Ou is well suited to advocate for families as the ELB's Parent Representative with this perspective in mind as well as bringing her own experience of raising a wonderful 5 year old boy who attends a public elementary school to the ELB's discussions. Mei's family moved from China to Hawaii in 1990 and she began attending Central Middle School, earning her Master's in Early Childhood Education at Chaminade in 2011. She has worked in the Early Childhood field for over 18 years, working as a Lead teacher and Associate Director for Rainbow Schools, Family Child Care Trainer, QCP and QRIS (Quality Rating Improvement) Specialist, and Child & Adult Food Care Program Manager at PATCH. Mei joined Family Hui Hawai`i in August of 2021 as our Innovation and Project Support Manager. Among her many responsibilities, she facilitates parenting support groups and coaches family child care and preschool providers and their families. Her experiences as a parent and her many years working with numerous families allows her to speak on their behalf while her experiences in working as and with early childhood providers gives her the understanding of the early learning system and the challenges that come with the work.

Thank you for your attention and consideration to confirm Mei Ou as the Parent Representative on the Early Learning Board.

Me ka mahalo nui,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cherilyn Shiinoki".

Cherilyn Shiinoki, M.Ed.  
Executive Director  
Email: [cherilyn@familyhuihawaii.org](mailto:cherilyn@familyhuihawaii.org)  
Phone: (808) 230-7112

April 7, 2022

To: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Morcado Kim, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Education Committee

From: Gwen Dufault, Early Learning Programs Manager  
Family Hui Hawaii

Re: **GM 689 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Early Learning Board,  
Gubernatorial Nominee, MEI OU, for a term to expire 06-30-2024**

Hearing Date: 4/11/22

Time: 3:00PM

Location: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and Committee Members:

I am offering this testimony in support of the confirmation of the Governor's nomination of Mei Ou to serve a term on the Early Learning Board (ELB) to expire on 6/30/24.

I have worked closely with Mei Ou since August of 2021, at Family Hui Hawai'i where I currently serve as an Early Childhood Programs Manager. Mei possesses a unique set of knowledge gained from her years of work with family childcare (FCC) providers and families, serving at PATCH as Support Manager. She understands the needs and challenges that both FCC providers and families they serve face.

Mei's current work coaching several FCC providers on Oahu and Maui allows her to provide support and build providers' capacity and confidence to engage in conversations with families around child development and building family engagement.

Mei understands both the joys and challenges that come with parenting as a single mother raising a 5-year old. Having moved to Hawai'i from China when she was 11-years old, she also understands that families in Hawaii have diverse needs.

Though the time I have worked with Mei has been brief, her passion for supporting families as well as her colleagues shines through. Mei recognizes and respects parents/caregivers and families as their children's first teachers. She understands the importance of building trusting relationships among the families she works with. Her ability to face challenges with a can-do spirit makes her a great asset to the Board.

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

Sincerely,  
Gwen Dufault

Early Learning Programs Manager  
Family Hui Hawai'i

Mei possesses an array of knowledge and experience working with both practitioners and families in the field of early education.

March 8, 2022

The Honorable Ronald Kouchi, President, And Members of the Senate  
Thirty-First State Legislature Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 409  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senate President Kouchi and Members of the Senate:

In accordance with the provisions of Article V, Section 6 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, I have the honor to submit herewith for your consideration and confirmation, the following nomination:

Ms. Mei Ou  
Early Learning Board  
Expiration Date: 6/30/2024

I have known Ms. Ou for the past eight years while she was employed with PATCH as the Food Program Coordinator and Educator. Her principle responsibilities were to:

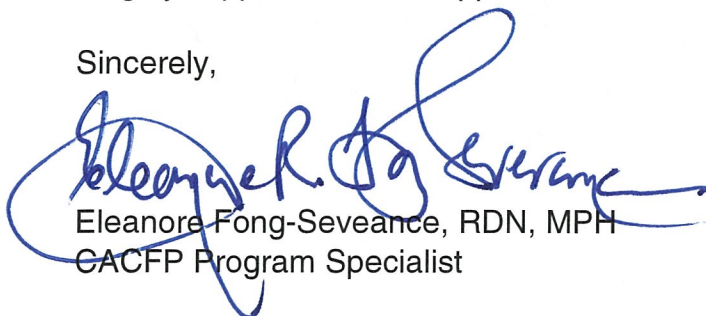
- Manage a staff of 5 employees statewide that monitored Child Care Providers at their residence for federal compliance of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
- Provided training for staff and providers at least twice annually.
- Monthly review of meal claims from the Child Care Providers statewide in preparation for submitting the counts to Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs for reimbursement.

Ms. Ou's dedication, leadership, tenacity and resilience were her outstanding qualities as she managed the CACFP. She was instrumental in growing the number of Child Care Providers statewide from 200 to approximately 275 during her tenure. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 Pandemic took its toll reducing the number of active Child Care Providers to 200 plus.

It has been a pleasure to get to know Ms. Ou while working as the Program Specialist with Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs as she administered the CACFP for PATCH.

I highly support Ms. Ou's appointment to the Early Learning Board.

Sincerely,



Eleanore Fong-Seveance, RDN, MPH  
CACFP Program Specialist