

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

House Committee on Finance

Monday, April 3, 2023

2:30 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 and Videoconference

In Strong Support

S.B. No. 1351, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Committee on Finance:

The Office of the Governor strongly supports S.B. No. 1351, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adverse childhood experiences or ACEs can have lasting and lifelong negative effects on the health and well-being of our keiki. Increasing resources for early childhood intervention will create additional support for families and ensure that these families have access to mental health resources.

This bill would help to address this ongoing need by creating and appropriating funding for a new Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program within the Department of Health. This program would increase access to mental health services for children from birth to age five and work to develop and implement flexible strategies to better understand the needs of our infants and young children across the state.

Many children struggle with mental health challenges, and the pandemic only intensified and highlighted the ongoing challenges they are facing. We are at a critical juncture in increasing awareness of, and access to, mental health services to improve outcomes for Hawaii residents and build healthier communities. S.B. No. 1351, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, is a step in the right direction to achieving this goal.

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



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

**Testimony to the Thirty-Second State Legislature
2023 Regular Session**

House Committee on Finance
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice-Chair

Monday, April 3, 2023 at 2:30 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

by:
Matthew J. Viola
Senior Judge, Deputy Chief Judge
Family Court of the First Circuit

Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill No. 1351 S.D.2, H.D.1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

Purpose: Establishes the infant and early childhood mental health program within the department of health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth up to age five. Appropriates funds for the establishment of the program, including one permanent full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) position. Effective 7/1/2050. (HD1)

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary takes no position on Senate Bill No. 1351, S.D.2, H.D.1, but acknowledges the need for effective mental health programs, including those for the youngest and most vulnerable members of our community.

Many believe that trauma endured by babies does not have a lasting effect. Through our Chapter 587A child abuse and neglect cases, especially our Zero To Three specialty court, we have learned that is just not true. The actions of adults towards our youngest keiki can have a lifelong impact on their mental health. Our community has had limited access to mental health programs for keiki from ages zero to five. Research shows that when keiki commence effective

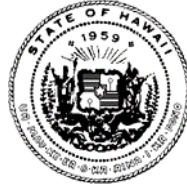


Senate Bill No. 1351, S.D.2, H.D.1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
House Committee on Finance
Monday, April 3, 2023 at 2:30 p.m.
Page 2

treatment early in their development, they have better outcomes and brighter futures. As a community we owe our keiki the opportunity to have the best start in life possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 1, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 1351 SD1– RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH.**

Hearing: April 3, 2023, 2:30 p.m.
Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this administration measure, provides comments, and defers to the Department of Health (DOH).

PURPOSE: This bill establishes the infant and early childhood mental health program within the department of health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth up to age five. Appropriates funds for the establishment of the program, including one permanent full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) position. Effective 7/1/2050. (HD1)

The SD1 amended the measure by making technical amendments; the SD2 further amended the measure by:

- (1) Changing the appropriations of \$800,000 and \$1,700,000, respectively, to unspecified amounts;
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 2050, to facilitate further discussion on the measure; and
- (3) Making technical nonsubstantive amendments for purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

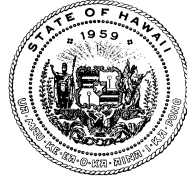
The SD2 amended the measure by:

- (1) Changing the appropriations of \$800,000 and \$1,700,000, respectively, to unspecified amounts;
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 2050, to facilitate further discussion on the measure; and
- (3) Making technical nonsubstantive amendments for purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The HD1 amended the measure by making additional technical amendments.

DHS appreciates the Legislature's investment in early childhood, including supporting children's social and emotional development. Early intervention services, including infant and early childhood mental health services, can increase parenting and child development knowledge and strengthen a family's ability to observe and respond to their child's needs. DHS will continue to work with DOH and community stakeholders to deliver various services for children and families.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1351 SD2 HD1
RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH.**

REP. KYLE YAMASHITA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: April 3, 2023

Room Number: 308

1 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health respectfully requests the adoption of
2 amendments critical to the future of this measure. The amendments are structural only, and do
3 not alter the subject-matter.

- 4 1. Amend instances of “program” with “pilot project.” Since there is no base budget
5 corollary, future funding is not assured. The pilot project will be evaluated and a
6 recommendation to amend Hawaii Revised Statute to define a program may be made
7 thereafter. This measure’s proposed amendments to chapter 321 are insufficient and ill-
8 defined to justify a budget proposal. This measure is best expressed as Session Law.
9 2. Coordination with other agencies to assure optimal communication, limit duplication of
10 effort, and prevent dilution of resources. Entities like the Executive Office on Early
11 Learning are statutorily mandated to address the 0 -3 years old age group and should have
12 a role in the conceptualization, implementation, and evaluation of the infant and early
13 childhood mental health pilot project.

14 **Offered Amendments:**

15 [~~“§321- Infant and early childhood mental health~~
16 ~~program; established. (a) There is established within~~
17 ~~the] The department of health, in coordination with the
18 executive office on early learning and the office of~~

1 wellness and resilience, shall implement [the] an infant
2 and early childhood mental health [program,] pilot
3 project, which shall provide and support mental health
4 services for children up to five years of age, to ensure
5 that each child in the [~~program~~] pilot project is able to
6 form close and secure adult and peer relationships;
7 experience, manage, and express a full range of emotions;
8 and explore the environment and learn, all in the context
9 of family, community, and culture.

10 (b) The infant and early childhood mental health
11 [~~program~~] pilot project shall develop and implement
12 flexible strategies for the delivery of services and
13 workforce training in a variety of settings, including
14 early child care and learning, home visitation, and early
15 intervention, and promote better understanding of the
16 needs of infants and young children, the importance of
17 positive early relationships, and the benefits of trauma-
18 informed care."
19

TO: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Robert G. Peters, Chair
Early Learning Board

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 1351 S.D. 2, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO INFANT & EARLY
CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

Hearing Date: Monday, April 3, 2023
Time: 2:30 pm
Location: Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

EARLY LEARNING BOARD POSITION: Support

ELB supports the intent of S.B. No. 1351 S.D. 2 H.D. 1 and defers to the Department of Health.

The Early Learning Board (ELB) is composed of early learning and care stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. The Board governs the Executive Office on Early Learning and supports its efforts to ensure a solid foundation of healthy child development and learning for Hawaii's *keiki*, prenatal to age five. Critical to that work is ensuring that young children's mental health is supported and those impacted by early trauma (child abuse, poverty, family violence, child neglect) are cared for and offered the supports needed to develop into healthy individuals. Without such support, young children are likely to experience developmental delays that potentially will negatively impact their growth over time.

ELB supports the Legislature's efforts to provide an infant and early childhood mental health program to implement strategies that aim to support and strengthen young children's growth, development, and learning by identifying, intervening, and preventing issues at some of the earliest stages of life. We also appreciate the Legislature's intent in this bill to support workforce training across the various early learning settings as workforce supports will be critical in implementing effective programming.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of this bill..



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

April 2, 2023

TO: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 1351 S.D. 2 H.D. 1 – RELATING TO INFANT & EARLY
CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH
Hearing Date: Monday, April 3, 2023
Time: 2:30 pm
Location: Conference Room 308

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

EOEL supports S.B. No. 1351 S.D. 2 H.D. 1 and defers to the Department of Health.

EOEL works with stakeholders to establish a system that ensures a solid foundation of early childhood development and learning for Hawai'i's children from prenatal to age five. Supporting early mental health and development in the youngest years is critical. EOEL is committed to collaborating with the DOH and other stakeholders to successfully implement this bill.

EOEL supports the Legislature's efforts to provide an infant and early childhood mental health program to implement strategies that aim to support and strengthen young children's growth, development, and learning by identifying, intervening, and preventing issues at some of the earliest stages of life.

We look forward to continuing to work with other stakeholders and departments to continue strengthening the systems of support for our youngest keiki across the State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



April 1, 2023

To: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
And Members of the House Committee on Finance
FROM: JoAnn Farnsworth, President, Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health
RE: S.B. 1351 SD2 HD1 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

The Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health (AIMH HI) STRONGLY SUPPORTS Senate Bill (SB) 1351 SD2 HD1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. SB 1351 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in Hawaii to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five.

The Hawai'i Association for Infant Mental Health was founded in 2008 with the vision that *In Hawai'i the early years are celebrated and revered, first relationships are nurtured, and infant and early childhood mental health is everyone's kuleana.*

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the Hawaii Community Foundation has partnered with several philanthropic organizations to invest approximately \$5 million in Promising Minds to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system. While philanthropy's investment has identified and started to address a critical community need, the demand for services, especially post-COVID, is overwhelming and state participation is critical to both provide additional services and to access federal funding in this new, growing practice area.

We ask that Finance support the budget requested as that will not only allow for IECMH consultation to be provided to those who serve our youngest children but build the critical infrastructure pieces of workforce development, a competency based poster platform and support for the consultants. AIMH HI has participated alongside nine organizations and state agency divisions on the IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Team. The public-private Coordinating Team has been working on a two-year project to build a sustainable and accessible IECMH consultation system and could assist or advise Department of Health on a blueprint for implementation. Anchoring IECMH into the Department of Health will create much needed infrastructure to coordinate local efforts, get consultants into our community and to secure available federal funds to expand IECMH to needed communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this very important effort for our keiki.

Mahalo nui loa,
JoAnn Farnsworth
President, Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1351 SD2 HD1:
RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH**

TO: House Committee on Finance

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Monday, April 3, 2023; 2:30 PM; CR 308 & via videoconference

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee on Finance

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **SB 1351 SD2 HD1** which establishes the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program within the Department of Health. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii has many years of experience providing a range of services to families with children age birth to five years old. Our staff was recently endorsed as an Infant Family Specialists by the Association of Infant Mental Health Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports the overall health and well-being of a person at any stage of life, this includes the mental health of infants and youth children. Early childhood is one of the most crucial developmental periods for a person. The mental health of the infant and young child sets the foundation for health in all areas of development, and can result in later more costly social and academic consequences for unmet needs.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports this bill to establish and provide funding for the infant and early childhood mental health program. We feel this bill provides a comprehensive approach which includes developing and implementing flexible strategies for delivery of services, as well as creating workforce training to promote better understanding of the needs of infant and early childhood mental health. We urge your support for this bill and ask for your assistance in its passing during this legislative session.

Please contact our Director of Advocacy and Community Relations, Shellie Niles at if you have any questions.





**Parents And
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1351 SD2 HD1

TO: Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, & Members,
House Committee on Finance
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO
DATE: April 3, 2023 at 2:30 PM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports SB 1351 SD2 HD1 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, which creates an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five.

Founded in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under age 5 need mental health supports. Since 2018, the Promising Minds initiative, partner organizations and funders across the state have been working together to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system grounded in trauma-informed practices. The creation of an IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health will help to coordinate and address the social-emotional and mental health needs of our youngest children. There is a critical shortage of mental health services for children ages 0-5 and their families. Early childhood programs and services are struggling to fill staff vacancies for mental health.

PACT has participated in the Promising Minds initiative. The collaboration has resulted in the usage of culturally appropriate and evidenced-based approaches to the benefit of our constituents. We are excited to see this work continue and grow through state investment.

Additionally, since 2022 Hawaii's IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Team has been working on a two-year project to build a sustainable, equitable and accessible IECMH consultation system. By December 2023, this Coordinating Team will develop a plan the new IECMH program in DOH could implement.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



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 Yamashita, Chair
Representative Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Re: SB1351 SD2 HD1, relating to infant and early childhood mental health
2:30 p.m., Apr. 3, 2023

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and committee members:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 1351 SD2 HD1, relating to infant and early childhood mental health.**

Our brains develop most rapidly from birth to 5 years old, with the first three years being the most rapid of those. One of the most important components of successful development for our youngest keiki is that they have strong, nurturing relationships with adults in their lives—whether it be parents, caregivers or other providers. It's vital that we support children and those who care for them with a system that promotes healthy development and nurturing relationships.

A dedicated infant and early childhood mental health program in the Department of Health could help to support these existing efforts while expanding their impact by supporting parents, caregivers and other service providers in their ability to foster healthy and nurturing relationships while knowing when and where to get help for keiki.

We look forward to the potential this program can **support and enhance existing programs and services for young children.** We believe an infant and early childhood mental health program should be an important complement to the various existing programs in the Family Health Services Division as well as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division.

We urge you to advance this measure.

Mahalo,
Ke'ōpū Reelitz
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy



April 3, 2023

TO: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Finance

FROM: Kerrie Urosevich, Co-Chair
Commit to Keiki

RE: S.B. 1351 SD2 HD1
Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Commit to Keiki **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** Senate Bill (SB) 1351 SD2 HD1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. SB 1351 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five.

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the Hawaii Community Foundation has partnered with several philanthropic organizations to invest approximately \$5 million in Promising Minds to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system. While philanthropy's investment has identified and started to address a critical community need, the demand for services, especially post-COVID, is overwhelming and state participation is critical to both provide additional services and to access federal funding in this new, growing practice area.

Significant government-nongovernment efforts are underway to help build a sustainable and equitable statewide IECMH consultation system. Anchoring IECMH into the Department of Health will create much needed infrastructure to coordinate local efforts, get consultants into our community and to secure available federal funds to expand IECMH to needed communities.

As Governor Green frequently says, "Hawaii's children deserve a trauma-free life." The creation of the IECMH program now will build on and anchor the work already underway and enable Hawaii's keiki to have a brighter start.

Thank you for allowing Commit to Keiki to provide testimony on this important measure.

Commit to Keiki, a project of the Early Childhood Action Strategy, is a public-private collaborative to ensure that Hawai'i's youngest children (birth to 5 years old) and their families have a brighter start. Early Childhood Action Strategy is a project under Collaborative Support Services, Inc. Led by a diverse Steering Committee, with representatives from Hawai'i business, education, early intervention, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, Commit to Keiki serves as a trusted partner and reliable resource for information on issues related to Hawai'i's youngest keiki and families.



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

April 1, 2023

Dear Honorable Members of the Hawai`i State Legislature,

On behalf of Family Hui Hawai`i, I would like to provide our support for Senate Bill 1351 SD2 establishing the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Program within the Department of Health (DOH) to provide and coordinate a mental health service continuum for children age birth to age five, develop and implement flexible strategies for the delivery of services and workforce training, and promote better understanding of the needs of infants and young children, the importance of positive early relationships, and the benefits of trauma-informed care,

Additionally, we recommend that the IECMH program require strategies to expand the knowledge and training around IECMH to families as well as the workforce. When families are equipped with knowledge and support to embrace their role as their child's first and most enduring teachers, they can advocate for their children best and therefore partner with the workforce to provide the best and ideal support for children's mental and physical health. 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. It is our responsibility to equip families with the supports to be a partner in the early learning health and wellness system as well as a client of the services that the system provides.

Family Hui Hawai`i is dedicated to strengthening families and communities, reducing violence against children, and promoting the healthy development of children, socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively, through peer to peer connection, parenting education and links to community services. Family Hui Hawai`i is a first contact provider to families with young children, prenatal-5 years serving over 1000 parents and children statewide each year. We see the struggles that families face every day and the difficulty they have in accessing supports and services. The investment in the families of our youngest children is a needed and economically strategic use of funds. During these early years, learning and wellness is about the whole child, physically, cognitively, and social-emotionally. Additionally, as an organization that employs staff and utilizes volunteers who empathize with the situations and families that they work with as peers, reflective supervision and reflective supervision consultation are critical supports needed to ensure that we are resilient and can provide effective and high quality support to our families.

Family Hui Hawai`i also recommends that the IECMH program builds upon the work that is already underway through the Promising Minds initiatives supported by the Hawaii Community Foundation and the work of IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Council in Hawaii.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the mental health crisis across all age groups in America. Trauma-informed services for our youngest keiki are especially important during the most critical years of brain development and growth. Research on Adverse Childhood Experiences during the early years show a direct correlation to poor life outcomes including depression, drug abuse, family violence, and early death. The prevalence of childhood and family trauma and stress in Hawai'i has reached crisis levels since the start of the pandemic. The State of Hawai'i Early Intervention Services has seen a dramatic decline in infant and toddler social and emotional development. In June 2020, 1000 parents with children <18yo were surveyed nationally. Female, single parents and families with younger children had higher declines in mental health.

Research shows that 52% of children in families with financial hardship are facing emotional distress. The investment in the families of our youngest children is a needed and economically strategic use of funds. During these early years, learning and wellness is about the whole child, physically, cognitively, and social-emotionally. Early learning is not just in the classroom and does not begin at age 4 years at PreKindergarten. Learning is everywhere the child is – at home, at their auntie's house, family child care provider's home, early learning centers, and at home with their family. Families play a critical role in preparing their children to be successful in school and life. They are the constant in the many learning environments that their children will experience as they grow. It is important to have an easy access point for families to receive information about their child's whole growth and development.

Prevention strategies building family resilience, social and concrete supports, parenting and early childhood development knowledge are proven to alter the outcomes of early adversity, reducing overall family stress and increasing wellbeing. Funding towards a full-time position for the IECMH program would provide a critical step in building a strong system for supporting our children and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for HB1053 and SB1351. I urge you to move these bills forward.

Respectfully,



Cherilyn Shiinoki

Executive Director



Date: April 2nd, 2023

To: House Committee on Finance
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
and Committee Members

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: **Strong Support for SB1351 SD2 HD1**, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. Over 300 ECAS network partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS strongly supports passage of SB1351 SD2 HD1. SB 1351 SD2 HD1 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five. **We request the Committee invest in PREVENTION and fund this bill to the full amount requested.** By investing in our youngest keiki's mental health, the state will save millions in downstream mental health crises. We will save in school remediation, mental health services, substance abuse, homelessness and incarceration. As Frederick Douglass said, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." It's also a lot less expensive.

Infant and early childhood mental health has been identified as a top priority by all ECAS teams. It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 need mental health supports. Since 2018, direct service providers, philanthropic organizations and representatives from Department of Health, Department of Human Services and the Executive Office on Early Learning have been working together to implement the [Integrated Infant and Early Childhood Behavioral Health Plan](#). Coordination of the Plan has been funded by philanthropy and the Department of Health.

Philanthropy, in partnership with state partners, has laid the groundwork for the IECMH system. **The budget request is imperative to establish required state infrastructure and position Hawai'i for federal funding.** Investing in a full-time DOH position will fill a systems' gap, ensuring our youngest keiki get the mental health services they need. The full-time position will also help streamline statewide efforts and position Hawai'i to pull down existing federal funding that supports early childhood mental health. Funding for three consultants will help meet immediate unmet needs in home visiting, early intervention and child care and the remaining funds will be allocated to basic infrastructure like professional rosters to ensure quality, data collection and evaluation.

As Governor Green frequently says, "Hawaii's children deserve a trauma-free life." We have all seen the recent statistics in youth mental health. Young people are increasingly harming themselves, taking their own lives, harming others through gun and other related violence, dropping out of school and even becoming homeless. Mental health crises are preventable and we can make a significant impact by ensuring our youngest keiki and their families are happy and healthy. Please enable Hawaii's keiki to have a brighter start by supporting and funding this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support of SB1351 SD2 HD1.**

SB-1351-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 1:10:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/3/2023 2:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| jayne arasaki | Rainbow Schools | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

TO: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair; and

members of the House Committee on Finance

FROM: Jayne Arasaki

RE: SB 1351 SD2, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Rainbow Schools strongly supports SB 1351 SD2 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. SB 1351 SD2 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five. This bill is timely and important because:

1. there is a proactive plan by State of Hawaii Department of Health already to address the gap and provide IECMH services;
2. the budget in SB 1351 SD2 is realistic for the two-year timeline; and
3. the workforce exists to provide the service, and more are currently in training for future workforce needs

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under age 5 are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the Promising Minds initiative and many partner organizations and funders across the state have been working together to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system. All of this work is grounded in trauma-informed practices. The creation of a IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health will help to coordinate and address needs that we see in the community. We are excited to see this work continue and grow through state investment.

I urge the House to move SB 1351 SD2 forward.



HAWAI'I COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

TO: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair; and
members of the House Committee on Finance

FROM: Micah A. Kāne, Chief Executive Officer & President

DATE: April 2, 2023

RE: Support for SB 1351 SD 2, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) **strongly supports** Senate Bill 1351 SD 2 (SB 1351 SD 2) relating to infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH). This bill would help to better coordinate mental health across the lifespan, inclusive of Hawai'i's 0- to 5-year-olds. Currently, no one agency or department is responsible for coordinating IECMH and as a result services are not adequate, nor part of a cohesive system of prevention and care. We commend Department of Health for stepping up to address this gap in service delivery and working proactively to develop a plan.

In 2019, HCF launched Promising Minds, a four-year initiative dedicated to improving early childhood behavioral health in Hawai'i by investing in the future of our keiki, especially those at-risk of trauma, abuse and neglect, or dealing with their aftereffects. Hawai'i Community Foundation and co-funders of Promising Minds have invested \$5 million in strengthening Hawai'i's mental health system so it includes infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families. One of the pilot efforts has been supporting IECMH consultation on a small scale through "give back" field placement hours with early childhood programs. That pilot has a developmental evaluation to answer major evaluation questions, support continuous improvement and facilitate growth of the program. The effort should expand; it is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 are in need of mental health supports.

SB 1351 SD 2 would increase Hawai'i's eligibility for new federal funds for the program and continue to leverage public-private investments locally. The proposed budget in the bill is realistic for two years. Most importantly, there is a ready workforce available to provide IECMH services and more people in training who can provide services in future years.

Finally, SB 1351 SD 2 builds on work that is currently underway. Since 2022, HCF has participated alongside nine organizations and state agency divisions on the IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Team. The public-private Coordinating Team has been working on a two-year project to build a sustainable and accessible IECMH consultation system and could assist or advise Department of Health on a blueprint for implementation.

If we provide an ounce of prevention in the early years, the social and health benefits can positively impact a lifetime. Mahalo for hearing this important bill and I urge the Committee to move SB 1351 SD 2 forward.

SB-1351-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 7:46:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/3/2023 2:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Laurie Tochiki | EPIC `Ohana | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

We support this important proposal to improve infant and early childhood mental health in our state



April 3, 2023

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ALFRED L. CASTLE
Executive Director and Treasurer

To: Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Al Castle, Executive Director, S.N. & Mary Castle Foundation

Re: S.B. 1351 SD2HD1 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

The Samuel N. & Mary Castle Foundation strongly supports Senate Bill (SB) 1351 SD2 HD1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. SB 1351 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five.

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the Hawaii Community Foundation has partnered with the Castle Foundation and other foundations to invest approximately \$5 million in Promising Minds to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system. While philanthropy's investment has identified and started to address a critical community need, the demand for services, especially post-COVID, is overwhelming and state participation is critical to both provide additional services and to access federal funding in this new, growing practice area.

Significant government-non-government efforts are underway to help build a sustainable and equitable statewide EECMH consultation system. Anchoring EECMH into the Department of Health will create much needed infrastructure to coordinate local efforts, get consultants into our community and to secure available federal funds to expand IECMH to needed communities.

Thank you for considering this important bill. We look forward to more co-investments with the state of Hawaii.

Alfred L. Castle
Executive Director

SB-1351-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 11:05:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/3/2023 2:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Shelly Tokunaga May | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha

I am in support of SB1351 to establish infant and early childhood mental health services program. Providing early support to keiki and families are critical to stronger outcomes for everyone.

Mahalo

Shelly Tokunaga-May

SB-1351-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 1:26:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/3/2023 2:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Erin Henderson Lacerdo | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha to the Honorable Finance Committee,

My name is Erin Henderson Lacerdo and I am an LCSW in the state of Hawai'i. I am **IN SUPPORT** of the passage of SB1351. I have dedicated the past 15 years of my career to serving babies and their families across the state. The creation of this program in the state will ensure equal access to specialized mental health support to our most vulnerable and promising population. As such, this program is incredibly needed and an important investment in our future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-1351-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 7:51:13 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/3/2023 2:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Candace Pang | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in support of the effort of this bill to anchor IECMH into the Department of Health in order to provide the appropriate infrastructure to expand IECMH to the community!

SB-1351-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 7:58:28 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/3/2023 2:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Lawrence Toutant | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

To whomever it may concern,

I am writing testimony for and am in support of HB 610. As a concerned Hawai'i resident, I am in favor of supporting children 0-5 in preventative mental health efforts. Children within this vulnerable age range sometimes have no healthy connections with others. A trauma-informed, comprehensive approach to building a sense of safety in the keiki would result in only positive outcomes in the short and long-term. I have worked with the homeless population on Maui as a Homeless Outreach Worker with Mental Health Kokua, and I have seen first hand the behavioral and mental health challenges affecting children. Many times due to drug/alcohol use while during the pregnancy term, children who are homeless face unique challenges. I believe that this program would affectively reach this population and others. Thank you for your consideration.

Warmly,

Lawrence Toutant (808) 286-5475

TO: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair; and
members of the House Committee on Finance

FROM: Tina Porras-Jones, constituent/citizen

RE: SB 1351 SD2, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

I strongly supports SB 1351 SD2 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. SB 1351 SD2 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five. This bill is timely and important because:

there is a proactive plan by State of Hawaii Department of Health already to address the gap and provide IECMH services;

the budget in SB 1351 SD2 is realistic for the two-year timeline; and

the workforce exists to provide the service, and more are currently in training for future workforce needs

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under age 5 are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the Promising Minds initiative and many partner organizations and funders across the state have been working together to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system. All of this work is grounded in trauma-informed practices. The creation of a IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health will help to coordinate and address needs that we see in the community. We are excited to see this work continue and grow through state investment.

I have an child that benefitted from the early intervention services, she had PT, OT, and speech therapy. This year she will graduate on time with 3.3 GPA, without that supportive start she would be behind.

I urge the House to move SB 1351 SD2 forward.