

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
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
February 18, 2022

The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Thirty-First Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Dela Cruz, and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: SB2024 SD1 Relating to Newborn Hearing Screening

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **STRONGLY SUPPORTS SB2024 SD1** which Requires diagnostic audiologic evaluation results of newborn hearing screening evaluations, or infants whose hearing status changes, to be provided to the Department of Health.

Timely reporting and referral to early intervention will increase the percentage of deaf and hard of hearing infants receiving timely services to develop oral and/or sign language communication. Mandating the reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results for newborns who do not pass hearing screening will help Hawaii meet the national 1-3-6 goal to help children who are deaf or hard of hearing be language ready for school.

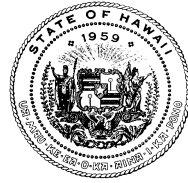
The council respectfully defers to the Department of Health for further guidance.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support of SB2024 SD1**.

Sincerely,

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

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 2024 S.D. 1
RELATING TO NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING**

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

Hearing Date: 2/18/2022

Room Number: Conference Rm 211
& Videoconference

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

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department **strongly supports** this measure to amend Hawaii
3 Revised Statutes (HRS) §321-361 to 363 to mandate the reporting of diagnostic audiologic
4 evaluation results of infants who do not pass the hearing screening test or are diagnosed as deaf
5 or hard of hearing up to the age of three years.

6 This bill will improve the identification and follow-up of infants who are deaf or hard of hearing.
7 The DOH Newborn Hearing Screening Program helps children who fail hearing screening to
8 receive diagnostic testing and assists children who are deaf or hard of hearing in enrolling in
9 early intervention services to support their development of oral and/or sign language
10 communication. This is especially important since national data show that the incidence of
11 infants who are born deaf or hard of hearing in Hawaii is at least twice the incidence in other
12 states.

13 Newborn hearing screening is mandated by Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §321-361 to 363
14 (2001) as a public health screening program that helps deaf or hard of hearing children reach
15 their developmental milestones and be language ready for school. The national standards for
16 early hearing detection and intervention are screening by 1 month of age, identification by 3
17 months, and enrollment in early intervention services by 6 months to support children in being
18 language ready for school.

1 In 2020, 292 newborns did not pass newborn hearing screening. Without access to all the
2 diagnostic audiologic evaluation results on these newborns, NHSP does not know what happened
3 to 98 (34%) of these newborns. The missing diagnostic audiologic evaluation results cause delay
4 for entry into early intervention services for the infants who are deaf or hard of hearing. In 2020,
5 51 infants were diagnosed with permanent hearing loss, but only 14 (27%) enrolled in early
6 intervention by 6 months of age. Timely and consistent reporting of diagnostic audiologic
7 evaluation results will allow the program staff to identify, contact, and provide support to
8 families of infants who need an evaluation before 3 months of age. Timely reporting and referral
9 to early intervention will increase the percentage of deaf and hard of hearing infants receiving
10 timely services to develop oral and/or sign language communication.

11 Mandating the reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results to the DOH for newborns
12 who do not pass hearing screening will help Hawaii meet the national 1-3-6 goal to help children
13 who are deaf or hard of hearing be language ready for school. Reporting of diagnostic results to
14 NHSP is exempt from Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations
15 under the public health program provisions.

16 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

February 16, 2022

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

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

SUBJECT: **Measure:** S.B. No. 2024 S.D. 1 – RELATING TO NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING
Hearing Date: Friday, February 18, 2022
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location: Videoconference

Bill Description: Requires diagnostic audiological evaluation results of newborn hearing screening evaluations, or infants whose hearing status changes, to be provided to the department of health.

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 S.B. No. 2024 S.D. 1 and defers to the Department of Health (DOH) as it relates to newborn hearing screening and reporting.

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 Newborn Hearing Screening Program in Hawaii assists children under age 3 years of age who are deaf or hard of hearing in enrolling in early intervention services to support their development of oral and/or sign language communication. Early identification of children who are born deaf or hard of hearing is critical to ensure families have resources necessary to help their children acquire language, spoken and/or visual, and achieve age-appropriate communicative, cognitive, academic, social, and emotional development. National data show that the incidences of infants who are born deaf or hard of hearing in Hawaii are at least twice the incidences in other states. According to the Department of Health, in 2020, 52 infants were diagnosed with permanent hearing loss, but only 14 (27 percent) enrolled in early intervention by 6 months of age.

As we work to increase access to quality early learning opportunities for our keiki, early identification and treatment of hearing problems support children in their readiness for learning, school performance, and academic achievement. Timely and consistent diagnostic audiological evaluations and reporting of those evaluations will allow program staff to identify and provide the necessary support to families of infants who may be deaf or hard of hearing.

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



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129

February 18, 2022

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senate Bill 2024, Senate Draft 1 – Relating to Newborn Hearing Screening

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Bill 2024, Senate Draft 1 that amends the Statewide Newborn Hearing Screening Program statute to require diagnostic audiologic evaluation results of newborn hearing screening evaluations for infants whose hearing status changes to be provided to the Department of Health.

The addition of four new definitions in Sections 321-361 to 321-363 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes, are appropriate in the field of audiology and medicine. A statewide system for hearing screening and diagnostic audiologic evaluation to identify infants who are deaf or hard of hearing, and referral and enrollment in early intervention services is crucial to early developmental milestones.

Audiologists and physicians diagnostic audiologic evaluation reports to the Department of Health are critical and necessary to assist parents or families whose child may fall through the system. The public health goal is to identify and maximize social, emotional, and language outcomes for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Pagano
for KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director



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

To: Senator Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: **SB 2024 SD1- Relating to Newborn Hearing Screening**
10:00 AM, February 18, 2022

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and committee members,

On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to **testify in support of Senate Bill 2024 SD1**, relating to newborn hearing screening.

Early identification of hearing loss is important to ensure children and their caregivers are provided the supports and care they need. Hawai'i has a high rate of infants who are born deaf or hard of hearing. The Hawaii rate (4/1000 births) is twice the rate in other states (2/1000). Senate Bill 2024 updates the definitions and terminology in the current HRS section, and it ensures that the appropriate data related to diagnostic audiologic evaluations are collected by Department of Health. Early diagnosis and referral to early intervention services will help children reach their developmental milestones and be ready to enter school with their peers. SB 2024 strengthens the current statute and in turn, strengthen the healthcare system for children.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2024.

Kathleen Algire
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

Date: February 16, 2022

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran , Vice Chair
And members of the Committee

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: **Support for SB2024**, Relating to Newborn Hearing Screening

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector partnership 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 SB2024, which amends the newborn hearing screening statute to mandate reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results to improve hearing follow-up of infants. As such, this measure will improve the identification and follow-up of infants who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Newborn Hearing Screening Program assists children under age 3 years who are deaf or hard of hearing in enrolling in early intervention services to support their development of oral and/or sign language communication. Studies show that children who are deaf or hard of hearing who receive early hearing screening, diagnostic testing, and early intervention services have better vocabulary outcomes, reach language and communication milestones, and are language ready for school.

This is especially important since national data show that the incidence of infants who are born deaf or hard of hearing in Hawaii is at least twice the incidence in other states.

SB2024 will help to ensure:

- 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 measure.



HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Date: February 18, 2022

From: Hawaii Medical Association

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio MD, Chair, HMA Legislative Committee

**Re: SB 2024 SD1 Newborns; Hearing Screening; Diagnostic Audiologic Evaluations; Department of Health
Position: Support**

Newborn hearing loss is difficult to detect, and many cases can go undiagnosed until a child is of speaking age. The Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) mandate newborn hearing screening. HMA supports this measure which would improve the reporting of abnormal hearing tests to the Department of Health Newborn Hearing Screening Program. This will ensure timely diagnostic evaluation by a Pediatric Audiologist before 3 months of age, so babies with hearing loss may begin early intervention services before 6 months of age.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify in support of this measure.

REFERENCES

Hawaii Department of Health. [Newborn Hearing Screening Program.](#)

Hawaii Department of Health. [Early Hearing Detection & Intervention \(EHDI\) System in Hawaii, state grant, 2020.](#)

HMA OFFICERS

President – Angela Pratt, MD President-Elect – Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD
Immediate Past President – Michael Champion, MD Treasurer – Nadine Tenn Salle, MD
Secretary – Thomas Kosasa, MD Executive Director – Marc Alexander



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129
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February 18, 2022

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

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Ms. Susan Wood, *Vice Chair*

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Ms. Virginia Beringer
Ms. Mary Brogan
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman
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Amanda Kaahanui, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Student Achievement Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 2024, SD 1 - Relating to Newborn Hearing Screening

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is in strong support of SB 2024 which requires diagnostic audiologic evaluation results of newborn hearing screening evaluations to be provided to the Department of Health.

Hawaii was a pioneer in this best practice of testing infants at birth to detect hearing loss. The development of an early screening program was given a high priority due to fact that Hawaii has twice the rate of infants born deaf or hard of hearing per capita than other states.

However, a number of infants who failed their hearing screening are lost to follow-up every year by the Newborn Hearing Screening Program, because their diagnostic evaluation results are not shared with the Department of Health. By mandating this reporting, we ensure that the families of these infants are offered timely early intervention services that supports the family and better prepares young children for entry into preschool by helping them acquire language.

Mahalo for the opportunity to express our support for this important legislation.

Respectfully,

Martha Guinan
Chair

LATE

SB-2024-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2022 6:01:44 AM
Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nikki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Nikki Kepoo and I am a mother of a deaf child. 95% of all children born deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf blind are born to hearing parents. Majority of us with no contact to the deaf community or aware of resources. Screening was the only way I was made aware of my sons deafness which allowed me to seek and use the necessary resources that have helped our ohana build a strong foundation in his opportunities for success.

Families who are unaware won't typically know until the child is 2-3 years old which creates language deprivation. It's is critical to have the ability to address access to language development as soon as possible. Additionally, there are cases where families needed an evaluation after birth due to services originally given, opportunities available at an early age, or progressed hearing loss. The timing to identification is critical.

I strongly urge the passing of this bill to ensure families ALL receive timely, appropriate, and adequate services. The only way for them to do this, is to know their childs condition throughout their upbringing.

Mahalo,

Nikki Kepoo