

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 24 2023

RE: H.B. No. 961
H.D. 1
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2023
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred H.B. No. 961, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Appropriate funds for the Preschool Open Doors Program and Executive Office on Early Learning to expand access to preschool and to implement program changes required by previous acts;
- (2) Expand the types of entities from which a Preschool Open Doors service provider may obtain accreditation;
- (3) Expand the Preschool Open Doors Program application process to eligible three-year-old children; and
- (4) Authorize the Preschool Open Doors Special Fund to receive federal funds.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Department of Human Services, Early Learning Board, Executive Office on Early Learning, University of Hawai'i System, Hawaii Children's Action



Network Speaks!, Hui for Excellence in Education, Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools, Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii, Early Childhood Action Strategy, Parents and Children Together, Chamber of Commerce Hawaii, Commit to Keiki, Kamehameha Schools, and one individual. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Budget and Finance and one individual.

Your Committee finds that access to preschool is a social justice issue for the State as pre-kindergarten programs are key in preparing Hawaii's keiki for future academic, social, and career success. This year, the State launched the Ready Keiki Initiative, a multi-faceted plan to expand high-quality childcare and pre-kindergarten programs for three- and four-year-old students by 2032. To ensure the success of the Ready Keiki Initiative, expansion of the Preschool Open Doors Program, additional opportunities and pathways for educators, and additional classroom space are needed to support increased demand. This measure provides critical support to the Preschool Open Doors Program and to enable receipt of federal funding to ensure Hawaii's keiki are prepared and ready to learn.

Your Committee has amended this measure by inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 961, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 961, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Education,



MICHELLE N. KIDANI, Chair



