



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

March 19, 2023

**TO:** Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Sharon Y. Morikawa, Chair  
Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

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

**SUBJECT: Measure:** H.B. No. 547 H.D. 1 – RELATING TO CHILD CARE  
**Hearing Date:** Monday, March 20, 2023  
**Time:** 3:00 pm  
**Location:** Conference Room 224

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

EOEL supports the intent of H.B. No. 547 H.D. 1 and defers to the Department of Human Services.

EOEL recognizes that increasing compensation is an effective way to increase recruitment and retention of a qualified early learning workforce. Despite working in a specialized field with health, safety, educational requirements, and higher levels of education than the average American worker (Whitebook et al., 1990), many early childhood care and education providers remain at the second or third percentile in the Bureau of Labor and Statistics rankings of occupation, making wages comparable to that of parking lot attendants, bartenders, and laundry service workers. We also know that our youngest keiki, our infants and toddlers, comprise one of our biggest gap groups in Hawai'i with families facing difficulties in being able to find and secure care.

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. EOEL supports the intention of the bill to focus on the professionals who serve our youngest keiki as those most likely to be furthest from fair wages. We look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature to increase access to quality early learning programs and services and to support the early childhood care and education workforce in the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

TO: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair  
Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair  
Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair  
Committee on Labor and Technology

FROM: Robert G. Peters, Chair  
Early Learning Board

SUBJECT: Measure: H.B. No. 547 H.D. 1 – RELATING TO CHILD CARE

Hearing Date: Monday, March 20, 2023

Time: 3:00 pm

Location: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

EARLY LEARNING BOARD POSITION: Support the Intent

The Early Learning Board (ELB) supports the intent of H.B. No. 547 H.D. 1 and defers to the Department of Human Services.

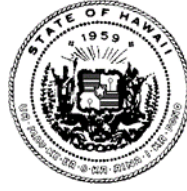
ELB is the governing board for the Executive Office on Early Learning, charged with policy development supportive of a quality State wide early learning and care system. One of its priorities is ensuring there is a qualified workforce with the capacity to nurture the growth and development of children from pre-natal to age 5. Challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff are a significant barrier to sustaining the early learning workforce, particularly in the infant and toddler sector.

Increasing compensation is an effective way to increase recruitment and retention of a qualified early learning workforce. Despite working in a specialized field with health, safety, and educational requirements and having higher levels of education than the average American worker (Whitebook et al., 1990), many early childhood care and education providers remain at the second or third percentile in the Bureau of Labor and Statistics rankings of occupation, making wages comparable to that of parking lot attendants, bartenders, and laundry service workers. We also know that our youngest keiki, our infants and toddlers, are one of our biggest gap groups in Hawaii with families facing difficulties in being able to find and secure care.

Hawaii's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. ELB supports the intention of the bill to focus on those who service our youngest keiki as they are the most likely to be furthest from fair wages.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature to support increasing access to quality early learning programs and services and the workforce in the State. Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony on this bill.

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

March 19, 2023

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair  
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [HB 547 HD1](#) – RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE

Hearing: March 20, 2023, 3:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of the bill and provides comments.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to establish and implement a two-year infant and toddler child care worker subsidy pilot program to assist in retaining the existing child care workforce. Appropriates funds for the pilot program. Sunsets 7/1/2025. Effective 6/30/3000.

The HD1 amended this measure by:

- 1) Inserting language establishing standards for the distribution of the funds appropriated in this measure as subsidies under the Infant and Toddler Child Care Worker Subsidy Pilot Program;
- 2) Changing the effective date to June 30, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- 3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

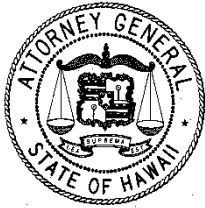
Regarding Section 2, Page 5, subsection (g), DHS does not have the capacity nor the means to enter into a contract with each eligible infant and toddler child care worker for the proposed two-year pilot period. According to our records from January 2023, there are approximately five hundred fifty infant and toddler workers among sixty-seven licensed infant and toddler centers statewide. Instead, DHS proposes that licensed infant and toddler child care centers would apply on behalf of their child care workers and provide proof that the child care worker meets the criteria in Section 2, Page 3, subsection (e) and be responsible for disbursing the subsidized participant's wages and ensuring that participants are paid wages of at least \$16.00 per hour.

According to the 2022 RAND study that was conducted in partnership with the University of Hawaii at Manoa for the Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project (ECE3), the wage or salary of early educators in Hawaii was estimated at approximately \$13–\$17 per hour. To adequately fund this proposed measure, the Department recommends that a general fund appropriation of \$6,336,000 be considered. This appropriation amount is calculated by multiplying \$3 (the difference between \$16/hour and \$13/hour) x 160 hours/month x 12 months x 550 infant and toddler workers x 2 years.

DHS will develop standards and qualifications for participation in the pilot program by child care workers and review each request to determine whether the child care worker is eligible to participate in the subsidy pilot program and receive a subsidy.

To implement the two-year infant and toddler child care worker subsidy pilot program, DHS requests an effective date after December 31, 2023, to give DHS time to make the necessary program and system changes and develop administrative processes and rules.

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



**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA  
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

H.B. NO. 547, H.D. 1, RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE.

**BEFORE THE:**

SENATE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND ON  
LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

**DATE:** Monday, March 20, 2023

**TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 224

**TESTIFIER(S):** Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or  
James W. Walther or Melissa J. Kolonie, Deputy Attorneys General

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Chairs San Buenaventura and Moriwaki and Members of the Committees:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purpose of this bill is to require the Department of Human Services to establish and implement a two-year infant and toddler child care worker subsidy pilot program to retain the existing early child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler center settings. The bill also appropriates funds for the pilot program.

We previously presented testimony on this bill, and the House Committee on Human Services adopted the sample standards that we suggested to address a potential constitutional issue under article VII, section 4, of the Hawaii State Constitution. House Draft 1, however, appears to have inadvertently added a semicolon and return in the definition of "private education institution" on page 6, line 20, through page 7, line 8. The semicolon and return at page 7, line 4, after "pre-kindergarten level services", change the intended meaning of paragraph (3) by making the wording "that are provided by an entity that holds itself out to the public as a school or educational institution, or that are identified by the entity as educational services rather than solely as child care services" apply to all the institutions listed in the preceding paragraphs (1) to (3). However, the wording is meant to apply only to the pre-kindergarten level services listed in paragraph (3). So that this provision can be implemented as intended,

we recommend deleting the semicolon and the return on page 7, line 3, so paragraph (3) would read:

- (3) Pre-kindergarten level services[;] that are provided by an entity that holds itself out to the public as a school or educational institution, or that are identified by the entity as educational services rather than solely as child care services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.



HAWAI'I STATE  
COALITION AGAINST  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

March 20, 2023

Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura

Vice Chair Henry J.C. Aquino

Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki

Sen. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro

Sen. Brenton Awa

Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology:

Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki

Vice Chair Chris Lee

Sen. Les Ihara, Jr.

Sen. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran

Sen. Kurt Fevella

Re: HB547 HD1 Relating to Early Childcare

Dear Chairs San Buenaventura and Moriwaki, Vice Chairs Aquino and Lee, and Members of the Senate Committees on Health and Human Services and Labor and Technology:

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) addresses the social, political, and economic impacts of domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters.

On behalf of HSCADV and our 28 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of HB547 HD1**. Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. Preschools, childcare providers, and families already carry a heavy burden and cannot carry more without additional support.

The creation of a childcare worker subsidy pilot program is the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for domestic violence survivors who rely on childcare so they can address their trauma and healing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,  
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director



# holomua

COLLABORATIVE

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## OUR MISSION

To support and advance public policies that make Hawai'i affordable for all working families.

## OUR VISION

Collaborative, sustainable, and evidence-based public policies that create a diverse and sustainable Hawai'i economy, an abundance of quality job opportunities, and a future where all working families living in Hawai'i can thrive.

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## BOARD MEMBERS

Jason Fujimoto  
Meli James, *Board Chair*  
Micah Kāne  
Brandon Kurisu  
Mike Mohr  
Brad Nicolai  
Mike Pietsch

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Josh Feldman  
Brittany Heyd  
Alicia Moy  
Ed Schultz

Josh Wisch  
*President & Executive Director*

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827 Fort Street Mall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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info@holomua collaborative.org

HolomuaCollaborative.org

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology  
**Bill Number:** HB 547, HD 1, Relating to Early Child Care  
**Hearing Date and Time:** March 20, 2023 at 3:00pm (Room 224)  
**Re:** Testimony of Holomua Collaborative in support

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Lee, and Committee members:

We write in support of HB 547, HD 1, Relating to Early Child Care. The purpose of HB 547, HD 1 is to have the Department of Human Services develop a two-year child care worker subsidy pilot program to retain the existing early child care workforce in infant and toddler center settings and appropriate funds for the program.

Hawai'i is having an increasingly difficult time retaining and recruiting infant and toddler child care workers. Indeed, between 2018 and 2020 Hawai'i lost 20% of its child care workforce. When child care workers leave the profession, it becomes harder for child care providers to stay open. This ultimately makes it harder for families to get child care as demand increases while supply shrinks. And this disparity between supply and demand for child care is why families struggle to pay for facilities that charge \$20,000 per year per child, because that is what they must do to stay afloat.

Holomua supports innovative initiatives that help make Hawai'i affordable to all working families. We are especially interested in fostering cross-sector collaboration and supporting policies that are evidence-based. The subsidy program crafted by the authors of HB 547, HD 1 is a perfect example of all this.

Innovation: Pilot programs are an effective way to take an initial step at solving big problems, allowing successive iteration and improvement along the way. And in piloting this solution, it makes sense that the bill starts with infant and toddler child care workers, as they are the educators most likely to be farthest from fair wages. This is because national trends suggest that the younger the age of the child being served, the lower the pay for the educator.

Cross-sector collaboration: This solution necessarily involves the nonprofit sector (advocates like the Hawai'i Children's Action Network and the Hawai'i Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance) who have created the idea of this program, the government sector (in the form of the Department of Human Services who will be in charge of developing out the program), and the private sector in the form of the child care providers themselves, who are currently faced with not having enough professional employees because they lack the funding to pay them.



Evidence-based: The RAND Corporation,<sup>1</sup> in a recently published report, noted that wages and salaries for early educators in Hawai'i are not competitive. Median hourly wages are estimated at \$13-\$17 per hour currently, while the living wage estimate in Hawai'i is \$28.50 per hour. This is unsustainable. That is why RAND recommended that a starting strategy for addressing shortfalls in the child care workforce would be one-to-two year pilot program like this.

Additionally, multiple studies have shown that a person's most dramatic brain development occurs in the first three years of their life. Making sure that the frontline child care workers—who are in charge of molding the minds of babies and other young children during these critical years—are paid well enough to stay in the profession benefits: (1) the child care workers who can now stay in the profession; (2) the children who will receive professional care during critical years; (3) businesses whose employees depend on child care; (4) parents who can stay at their jobs because of greater access to child care; and (5) society as a whole, because a new generation of children will be better prepared to learn, grow, and thrive.

We know that child care providers operate on miniscule financial margins with fixed costs that can't be negotiated or reduced, like rent or electricity. This means that when they need to lower expenses they must turn to wages. And in turn, child care professionals leave the state. If this trend continues, we are likely to have lost more than a quarter of this workforce between 2018 and today.

But this pilot program is the type of innovative, collaborative, evidence-based program that can break this cycle and put us on a path to greater affordability both for child care workers and for those who need access to child care. We thank you for hearing this bill, and we are proud to support it.

Sincerely,



Josh Wisch  
President & Executive Director

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<sup>1</sup> See "Early Childhood Educators in Hawai'i: Addressing Compensation, Working Conditions, and Professional Advancement," at [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA1908-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1908-1.html).



Date: March 19, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Labor and Technology  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair  
Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for **HB547 HD1**, Relating to Early Child Care

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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. ECAS 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 HB547 HD1**, which would pilot a program to provide wage supplements or subsidies to early and education professionals working in infant and toddler centers.

High-quality child care and early learning programs are fundamental to thriving children, flourishing families, and a robust economy. An effective, well-trained, early childhood workforce is the backbone of these programs. This workforce, however, suffers from chronically low wages and turnover.

A 2022 study completed by the University of Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project showed that the average hourly wage for early care and education professionals in Hawaii ranges between \$13 and \$17 per hour. The COVID-19 pandemic compounded the impact of annual workforce turnover rates for early childhood educators that already ranged from 26-40%. Based on national trend data in child care employment, Hawaii is likely to have lost more than a quarter of our early care and learning workforce between 2018 and now. This erosion in the workforce has reduced existing operating capacity and poses significant barriers to expansion of Hawai'i's child care and early learning programs.

To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms. Addressing workforce compensation must start somewhere. Piloting a wage supplement model with our infant and toddler child care providers, who earn 22% less than preschool providers, nationally, allows us to support those professionals who care for our children at their most critical stage of brain development, yet are the farthest from fair wages.

ECAS supports this wage subsidy measure for infant and toddler child care providers as a first step toward supporting early care and education professionals as a whole. In order for Hawai'i to rebuild fully from the pandemic and meet the education, employment, and economic needs of the state, the state must support and sustain the child care sector and improve families' access to child care and early learning programs by prioritizing strategies to stabilize and expand the early childhood workforce.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in support of HB547 HD1**.



*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: Senator San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senator Aquino, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Moriwaki, Chair  
Senator Lee, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Re: HB547 HD1, relating to early child care  
3:00 p.m., Mar. 20, 2023

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs and members of the committees:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of House Bill 547 HD1, relating to early child care.**

At the heart of every early childhood care and education program are the professionals who cultivate the nurturing environment where our youngest keiki can grow, learn and thrive. Too often though, these critical professionals do not make a living wage. A 2022 local study completed by the University of Hawaii' Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project showed that early childhood care and education professionals earned between \$13 and \$17 per hour on average, far below a living wage in Hawai'i. In 2020, a national study also found that **1 in 3 child care workers faced food insecurity.**

**Early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good that deserves public investment.** A child's most rapid brain development happens between birth and three years old. The professionals who care for and educate infants and toddlers help them build vital skills that lay the foundation for social-emotional skills, math, motor skills and literacy.

In addition to helping develop the next generations of curious and engaged citizens, infant and toddler child care professionals enable parents, caregivers and other family members to go to work. **They are the workforce behind so many other workforces.**

Even as critical as these professionals are, we are losing them in droves. According to the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, **Hawai'i lost 20% of its early childhood care and education workforce between 2018 and 2020.**

*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.*

We need to **focus on retention** of the dedicated professionals currently in the workforce and attract the next generation of child care workers and early childhood educators. These efforts must start with raising their wages.

**HB547 is a crucial step forward to raise wages.** HB547 requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to pilot a program that would provide wage subsidies for staff in infant and toddler centers. The focus on infant and toddler centers makes sense because those educators are more likely to make the least. It also identifies a portion of the workforce small enough for DHS to be able to innovate solutions for long-term success. We hope that if this pilot program is successful, it can be implemented across the birth to kindergarten continuum.

**We anticipate a two-year pilot program for caregiving staff in infant and toddler centers will cost a total of \$6.34 million over the biennium or \$3.17 million per pilot year.** These costs will cover an additional \$3 per hour (difference between \$13 and \$16) for approximately 550 caregiving staff in infant toddler centers across the state. Additionally, the pilot program will help us understand how regular, predictable wage supplements help retention of early childhood care and education professionals.

Other jurisdictions, like Washington, D.C., Tennessee and North Carolina, already provide wage supplements and/or bonuses to address retention and incentivize additional training. North Carolina saw turnover decrease with their WAGE\$ program. Absent wage supplements, turnover rates for early childhood care and education professionals in North Carolina and nationally are typically between 30 and 40%. **In 2021, North Carolina WAGE\$ participants' turnover rate was only 13%, nearly 3 times lower than non-participants.** These kinds of programs are evidenced-based solutions that have a direct positive impact on retention.

Hawai'i is currently working toward rapid expansion of early childhood care and education options for families, looking to build more than 400 classrooms over the next decade. **To prepare for this expansion, we *must* focus on rebuilding and retaining the existing workforce.** We want to be sure that when classrooms are built, there are enough teachers to fill them. A pilot program allows the state to incubate and innovate solutions so that when the time is ripe, we will be able to implement wage supports in early learning and care from birth to 5.

**Please support HB547 HD1.**

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

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:11:18 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Testifying for Rainbow Family 808	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rainbow Family 808 supports HB547. Please pass this bill

Mike Golojuch, Sr., Secretary/Board Member

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 7:26:41 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Diana Voncina	Testifying for Stepping Stones Academy	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am the Founder of Stepping Stones Academy.

- Hawaii's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the **most undervalued** in our state.
- Although demand for early childhood educators is high, we often cannot afford to pay them a living wage, no matter how hard we try. We need help.
- Our sector provides a public good that requires public investment.
- Please support the creation of a child care worker subsidy pilot program. It is the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.



TORI RICHARD®  
HONOLULU

Friday, March 17, 2023

HB 547- Relating to a Childcare worker subsidy pilot program.

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Lee, and Committee members,

As a medium-sized Hawaii employer nearly 7 decades, in recent years we have seen many employees leave the workforce due to a lack of access to early childhood care and education. One of the greatest economic challenges facing Hawaii is ensuring our working population can afford to stay in Hawaii and remain in the workforce. To help ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who help staff these classrooms in order to retain and attract these workers. Please support the creation of a childcare worker subsidy pilot program as the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. We think it best to start with those most likely to be farthest from fair wages. A 2022 study completed by the University of Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project showed that on average between \$13 and \$17 per hour. National trends suggest that the younger the child is that you care for and educate the lower your pay is likely to be.

Preschools, childcare providers, and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. Because Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good, it requires public investment. Starting with our early childhood care and education professionals who are most likely to be farthest from fair wages makes sense. Starting with our infant and toddler childcare providers also helps families access quality care from the time babies need it most.

Please support this measure.

Sincerely,

Josh Feldman  
President & CEO  
Tori Richard, Ltd.



# Parents And Children Together

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS  
THAT MATTER MOST

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 547 HD1

**TO:** Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Aquino & Members, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Chair Moriwaki, Vice-Chair Lee & Members, Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

**FROM:** Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO

**DATE:** March 20, 2023 at 3:00 PM

**Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 547 HD1 Relating to Early Child Care**, which will support the creation of a child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step in improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

**Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state.** Their low wages are contributing to a workforce shortage that is will progressively impact the availability of quality programs. A 2022 study completed by the University of Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project showed that average wages are between \$13 and \$17 per hour. National trends suggest that the younger the child is that you care for and educate the lower your pay is likely to be.

Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. **Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good that requires public investment.**

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.

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





**Testimony Presented to:**  
**The Senate Committee on Health & Human Services**  
**The Senate Committee on Labor and Technology**  
**March 20, 2023, 3:00 p.m. (Room 224)**

**HB 547 HD1, RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE**

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Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

We write in **strong support of HB 547**, in which the Department of Human Services shall develop a two-year infant and toddler childcare worker subsidy pilot program to help retain our child care workforce and ensure that Hawaii families have access to quality child care.

aio is a locally owned company with holdings across a broad range of industries. Our companies are purpose-driven and firmly rooted in local values. At aio, Hawaii is at our core, and through our products and services, we work hard to make Hawaii a better place for future generations.

Our employees are our greatest asset, and we want to ensure that they have access to quality and affordable child care for their keiki. This subsidy pilot program is a good first step at retaining top child care professionals by improving their compensation.

Research shows that early childhood care professionals are critical to a child's development, and we want the best care possible to teach and mold the next generation.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in dark purple ink that reads "Brandon Kurisu".

Brandon Kurisu  
aio Family of Companies



**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 11:17:31 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Fox	Testifying for Malama Kaua'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We have to do something to help with the shortage of early childcare options on our islands - this subsidy program could make an impact. The shortage affects every area of our economy by keeping families home and under-earning to care for their families because they cannot obtain childcare.



To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services and Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Hearing Date/Time: Monday March 20, 2023 3PM

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 224

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 547 HD1

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Lee, and the Members of Committees,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 547 HD1 which would appropriate funds to require the Department of Human Services to establish and administer a two-year Infant and Toddler Child Care Worker Subsidy Pilot Program and appropriate funds.

The early childhood care and educational professionals are undervalued in Hawaii, averaging \$13 to \$17 per hour wage. It is no surprise that the number of professionals in this sector has been decreasing although they are in high demand. AAUW of Hawaii supports this measure since it would appropriate funds to pilot a wage subsidy program for the early childhood care and educational professionals. What we learn from the pilot program would then be used to pay what we need to pay these professionals to retain them. The families in Hawaii need them.

Please pass this measure and mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Younghee Overly  
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawaii  
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net

*The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawaii is an all volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kaua'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward Oahu. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity for equal opportunities in education, at workplace and for economic security, and in leadership.*



March 20, 2023

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Health & Human Services  
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology  
**Bill Number:** HB 547 HD1, Relating to Early Child Care  
**Hearing Date and Time:** March 20, 2023 at 3:00pm  
**Re:** Testimony of HPM Building Supply in support

Dear Chairs San Buenaventura & Moriwaki, Vice Chairs Aquino & Lee, and Committee Members:

I would like to submit this letter and written testimony in support of HB 547 HD1, Relating to Early Child Care. The purpose of HB 547 HD1 requires the department of human services to establish and implement a two-year infant and toddler childcare worker subsidy pilot program to assist in retaining the existing childcare workforce and appropriates funds for the pilot program.

HPM Building Supply is a 100% employee-owned company serving Hawaii's home improvement market and building industry for over 100 years since 1921. With 17 locations across Hawaii and Washington State, HPM offers various services and products, including retail stores, building supply and lumber yards, home design centers, drafting and design services, and manufacturing facilities. HPM is dedicated to enhancing homes, improving lives, and transforming communities. The company is guided by its core values of Heart, Character, and Growth, striving to provide top-quality products and build exceptional customer loyalty. HPM has earned recognition as a leader in the industry for its products, services, and commitment to its community.

As a State-wide employer with over 500 employees, we understand that many of our employees face childcare decisions daily. Much-needed childcare services gives parents peace of mind to go to work knowing their child is being taken care of. This bill seeks to improve the support of childcare workers by increasing wages and providing a subsidy by appropriating State funds. These early childhood workers are underpaid, and they provide a necessary public good. Increasing the minimum wage of these workers would assist with recruitment and retention.



(808) 966-5466 • FAX (808) 966-7564  
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**BUILDBETTER.LIVEBETTER.®**

This bill also aligns with HPM's values of Heart, Character, and Growth. By supporting early childhood workers, we invest in our future. We show that we care about the future generations and our current workforce shaping it. Our company's value of Heart is caring for one another as a community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 547 HD1. I strongly encourage your support and passage of this measure.

Sincerely,

Dennis Lin  
Community Relations Administrator



(808) 966-5466 • FAX (808) 966-7564  
16-166 MELEKAHIWA STREET • KEAAU, HAWAII 96749

[HPMHAWAII.COM](http://HPMHAWAII.COM)



**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 10:12:18 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shadi Naderi	Testifying for Little Hoku Montessori Academy	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I am the director of Little Hoku Montessori Academy on Maui. Hawaii early childhood programs are facing a critical situation. We have lost 1/5 of our services in the past two years and it is just getting worse. It is very difficult to pay a living wage to teachers in this field. We need you to support the creation of a child care worker subsidy program to save the early childhood programs in Hawaii. If not, the impact will be severe on our workforce and State's economy.

Mahalo!



**Testimony to  
The Committee on Health and Human Services and the Committee on Labor and Technology**

**Monday, March 20, 2023**

**3:00 PM**

**Conference Room 415 & VIA Videoconference  
Hawaii State Capitol**

**HB 547 HD1**

Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Lee and members of the committee,

Hawai'i Gas supports HB 547 HD1, which would establish a refundable child tax credit for Hawaii's working families. This bill is needed because the expansion of the *federal* child tax credit that was included as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 was allowed to expire by Congress, sending many families back into poverty. Hawai'i now has the opportunity to fill the gap left by the federal government.

Since 1904 Hawai'i Gas has been the only franchised gas utility in the State of Hawai'i. Over the years we have installed gas pipeline infrastructure, built bulk storage facilities with access to the harbor and developed a highly skilled workforce on every major island. With our family of employees working in communities across Hawai'i, we know how important it is for people to get just a little bit of extra help to make ends meet, especially as their own families grow.

Because of the time during the COVID pandemic that the expanded federal child tax credit was in effect we have the data to know that it worked. It resulted in a sharp, historic drop in child poverty rates, less food insecurity, and more financial stability. And because of the innovation to make the refundable credits paid monthly, families were better able to engage in financial planning, which helped keep them from falling behind in their finances throughout the year. This, in turn, infused more money into local economies each month. This positive impact was felt by small businesses as well. Thanks to a survey conducted by Small Business for America's Future, we learned that 62% of small business owners said the flexibility and predictability of the child tax credit allowed parents to increase expenditures on things like home-and-family based childcare, which benefits small businesses that need workers with stable schedules.

In short, the expanded federal tax credit lifted millions of people out of poverty, was designed in such a way that it helped with family financial planning, pushed more money into local small businesses and local economies, and was also shown to have no negative impact on employment. In fact, many families reported using child tax credit payments for childcare, *reducing* a barrier to employment. But since the federal tax credit was allowed to expire, all these benefits have been put at risk.

Hawai'i is in a good position to eliminate that risk and provide more security to local families by passing the state child tax credit, and we urge the committee to pass HB 547 HD1.



Thank you for the opportunity to testify.





TITLE GUARANTY  
HAWAII

March 17, 2023

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology  
**Bill Number:** HB 547, HD1, Relating to Early Child Care  
**Hearing Date & Time:** March 20, 2023 at 3:00pm (Room 224)  
**Re:** Testimony of Title Guaranty of Hawai'i in support

Aloha San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Lee, and Committee Members:

We write in support of HB 547, Relating to Early Child Care. This bill requires the Department of Human Services to pilot a program to provide wage supplements or subsidies for early childhood care and education professionals, starting first with those professionals who specialize in infant and toddler care.

Title Guaranty of Hawai'i is the oldest and largest title company in the state. We have been owned and operated by a kama'aina family since 1896 and we are proud to employ over 300 people who work in our branches all across the state. Being a longtime employer of so many people in Hawai'i, we know how important it is that our employees have access to quality and affordable child care. But we also know it's difficult for people to obtain child care in Hawai'i and when they do, it can be prohibitively expensive. For many parents, including those who work for us, being able to access child care they can afford is what allows them to continue to work. So, not having access is bad for us as an employer, stressful for the parents who we employ, and—most importantly—detrimental to the children. As not just a longtime employer, but also a committed member of our local community, we're lending our voice to support this effort because it is so important.

Early childhood care and education professionals are critical to young children's development. It is in their first three years when children's brains develop most rapidly. That means infant and toddler child care providers are critical to shaping the next generation of responsible, curious and contributing Hawai'i residents. These professionals come to their work with training that is specialized so that they can work with young children to grow and learn in developmentally appropriate ways. But we do not pay these folks nearly enough, which is why so many of them are leaving the profession. We can't afford to lose them.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 547.

Sincerely,

Mike B. Pietsch  
President and Chief Operating Officer  
Title Guaranty of Hawai'i



Title and Escrow is our business. Hawaii is our home.



**TO: HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY, WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEES**

**SUBJECT: HB 547 - RELATING TO CHILD CARE WORKERS**

**POSITION: IN SUPPORT**

Draft Testimony

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the committees,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning House Bill (HB) 547, relating to creating a wage subsidy pilot program to raise earnings for early childhood care and education professionals. As a member of the community, I strongly support HB 547, as I believe supporting the early learning workforce is critical to the economic and social health of our state.

Although early childhood care and education professionals in Hawaii are in high demand, the number of professionals in this sector has been decreasing significantly over the last 5 years. Personally, I know of a fellow student who received her degree in Early Childhood Education but is currently working a retail job, because the retail job is paying her more than what she can earn as a childcare provider. Her story is not unique, and it is sad to see that people with a passion for caring for infants and toddlers, who are so needed, are being driven to other employment. This wage subsidy pilot program can help stabilize the workforce, provide incentive to enrollment in early childhood education programs, and pave the way for a more long term funding solution.

Because national trends suggest that the younger the child is, the lower the childhood care and education worker is paid, it is critical that we start with improving their wages. We have to start somewhere, and starting with our infant and toddler child care providers also helps families access quality care from the time babies need it most.

As a community member, I strongly believe we should have measures in place that support a healthy, robust early learning system. Taking care of our keiki means we must take care of those who care for them, as we cannot expect them to be able to provide quality care without proper compensation. I appreciate the opportunity to provide the Committee with my testimony in support of HB 547.

Thank you,

Moevanu Jameson  
moevanu@yahoo.com

Mar. 17, 2023

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senator Henry Aquino, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Chair  
Senator Chris Lee, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Subject: **Measure** – HB547 HD1 RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE  
**Hearing Date** – Mar. 20, 2023  
**Time** - 3:00 PM  
**Location** - Room 224

**This testimony is in support of HB547 HD1.**

My name is Dr. Terry Lock. I am with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) College of Education (COE) and serve as the director of the Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity (ECE<sup>3</sup>) Project.

This project works with various organizations and coalitions to promote a diverse, well-prepared, well-supported, and well-compensated early care and education workforce for Hawai'i. Research has shown that a strong and stable early care and education workforce is needed to deliver high quality child care and early learning programs. However, like other states, Hawai'i's early care and education workforce, which is comprised primarily of women of color, has been faced with low wages, limited benefits, and poor working conditions for decades.

To better examine these issues, the ECE<sup>3</sup> Project commissioned the RAND Corporation to study Department of Human Services (DHS) licensed child care center staff and regulated family child care providers. This study found that on average they earn between \$13 and \$17 per hour, which is far behind other occupations, like public school teachers, with similar credentials.

Through focus groups and survey responses in this study, early educators described the difficult tension between their low wages and the messaging about the importance of early childhood development and education for children's success in school and in life. The wages for the ECE professionals who spend the most time caring for and educating children during this life phase do not reflect the perceived importance of their work.

From this study, a teacher working in a child care center said, *“I still like [this work], I love it, [...] [but] I’m leaving the field because I’m getting a job that’s going to pay me double.”*

Another survey respondent said, *“I believe [the ECE workforce] is grossly underpaid, undervalued, under appreciated. These teachers are shaping the future... Statistics state that birth to 5 years old are the most formative and important years... Why is something not being done to compensate [us for our work?} Why do people in certain jobs get pensions, retirements and [the ECE workforce] is so vastly overlooked[?]”*

The resulting challenges of low compensation is high turnover and difficulty with recruiting individuals in joining the profession. Poor wages threaten the profession who supports the child care needs of families and their employers and impact the continuity and quality of the care and education young children receive.

Therefore, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of these programs while not adding more cost to the preschools, child care programs and families that already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support.

**Because Hawai‘i’s early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good, it requires public investment.**

Like many states, our state can start using public funds for wage increases. Because infant and toddler child care professionals are in high demand and help parents return to work, it makes sense to start with our infant and toddler child care professionals.

These infant and toddler child care professionals have specialized knowledge and skills to offer a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment and activities. They are helping mold the minds of babies, at a time when brains are rapidly developing.

National trends show that the younger the age of the child being served, the lower the pay for the educator. To recruit and retain infant and toddler child care professionals, we must improve the wages of these infant and toddler child care professionals.

Please **support the creation of a child care worker subsidy pilot program** as the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 8:56:01 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raya Esteban	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and committee members,

Please support HB 547 HD1, which would support the creation of a child care worker subsidy pilot program as the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms.

**Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. In piloting solutions, we want to start with those most likely to be farthest from fair wages. A 2022 study completed by the University of Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project showed that, on average, early care educators earn between \$13 and \$17 per hour. National trends suggest that the younger the child is that you educate and care for, the lower your pay is likely to be.**

I was a preschool teacher for three years, and though I loved my job, I often struggled to make ends meet. I had to take on multiple jobs to supplement my income and earn a livable wage; oftentimes, the toll of working numerous jobs left me exhausted and unable to provide the quality care my kids deserved. At the time, I was living under my parents' roof, and so I did not have to pay for rent. But if I had to account for housing expenses, there would have been no possibility for me to fulfill my vocation as an early care educator. This would have been a colossal waste of my talent, expertise, and dedication for early care and education—a professional field that requires specialized skills and knowledge.

Any individual with the passion and finesse to care for and educate young children should not have to suffer through poverty-level wages as a consequence. That is a disgrace to our early care educators, to the children and families that they serve, and the whole of society that depends on the early care workforce to mold the minds and hearts of our next generation of leaders.

Preschools, child care providers, and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. Because Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good, it requires public investment.

We have to start somewhere with wage increases; starting with our early childhood care and education professionals who are most likely to be farthest from fair wages makes sense. Starting with our infant and toddler child care providers also helps families access quality care from the time babies need it most.

Please support this measure.

Mahalo,

Raya Esteban

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 12:38:33 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Malia Tsuchiya	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 9:28:45 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Julie S Kalakau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB547, which is the childcare worker wage bill. As a director in Early Childhood, I know firsthand just how hard teachers of young children work and how underpaid and undervalued they are. We continue to do our best to raise wages with a tough balance of not having to raise tuition too much for our working families. Raising tuition puts a burden on working parents. It is a challenge and this bill will be a huge assistance while we continue to find solutions to solve the bigger problems faced by the field of early childhood. This bill would validate the educators caring and teaching this important developmental stage! It will feel like validation for all the hard work and care they provide daily! I believe HB547 would be a great investment for the entire early childhood field for teachers, children and for working parents!

Thank you for your consideration.

Julie Kalakau

Sunshine School, Director



**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 10:53:18 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cards Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cards Pintor

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 6:53:30 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dena Akiu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Health and Human Services Committee Members,

Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Lee, and Labor and Technology Committee Members,

Aloha kākou,

I am submitting testimony in strong SUPPORT of HB547 HD1. The long-term benefits and supports that quality early learning programs provide is crucial in a young child’s most formative years. I've experienced these positive impacts in each of my roles as a mother, grandmother and an early childhood educator. In strengthening the early childhood educator workforce, we strengthen our youngest learners by building their brain development and instilling a positive disposition for life-long learning.

Hawai‘i’s early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. According to a study ([summary report](#)) conducted by the Hawai‘i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity (ECE3) Project at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, median hourly wages, estimated at approximately \$13–\$17 per hour, are well below the living wage estimate of at least \$28.50 per hour for the state. Although median wages for child care workers in Hawaii exceed the national median, the pattern is reversed once the high cost of living in the state is accounted for. Early educators are engaged in incredibly difficult and complex work that has been recognized as essential to children’s learning and development, supportive for families, and foundational to the economy ([Early Childhood Workforce Index 2020](#)). Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. We cannot carry more without your support.

Please support the creation of a child care worker subsidy pilot program. It is the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for Hawai‘i’s young children and families. Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony in SUPPORT of this measure.

Mahalo nui,

Dena Akiu



**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 7:39:55 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ed Akiu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm submitting testimony in support of HB547.

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. These professionals are essential workers that provide critical services to help young children thrive and families survive.

Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. We cannot carry more without your support. Please support a child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for young children and families in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 8:54:35 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carolyn Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support a child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for me, my family, and my community.

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 10:26:06 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Audra Robinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No testimony but I support bill HB547. Preschool teachers are special people who deserve better for taking care of our young children. They are the first people outside of the family that they can trust and learn so much from. They are invaluable!

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 7:43:39 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Natalie Wallsgrove	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of this bill. There is a crisis in the early childcare sector due to the disgracefully low wages for workers, yet the price of early childcare and education is crippling to families. In a state where the cost of living necessitates dual incomes, we can not ignore this problem. Programs similar to this have been shown to be successful elsewhere, and we owe it the families of Hawaii to move forward with this bill. My daughter's early educators have been some of the most valuable and loving people in her life, and they deserve to be compensated for their hard work and expertise. Please support this child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step toward improving wages for the some of the most critical professionals in our community.

Mahalo for your time. Natalie Wallsgrove

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 8:13:26 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laurie Takeno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. We cannot carry more without your support. I urge you to please pass this bill to help get us started on a path to sustainable quality care for children and families. When we take care of our child care workers and educators, we take care of our families.



**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 10:13:42 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susannah Lee Kandikatti	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

As a parent to a young child in preschool, I have had first hand experience observing the amazing services, care, and education that my child is receiving at her KCAA school. Early childhood professionals deserve higher wages as this group is imperative to the flourishing of our keiki.

I also had a friend who recently quit her job as an early childhood educator because she could not make ends meet with her teacher salary. She is one of the best people that I know and she cared about her students deeply, so it was very hard for me to see someone so valuable leave the field. I want to know and trust that there are qualified and passionate educators who are serving our children during some of their most formative years. Higher wages will help to ensure that these types of educators are in our preschools.

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 12:08:06 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms. I support this measure as the first step toward supporting early childhood care and education professionals.

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 6:35:45 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden and cannot carry more without additional support.

Please create a child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for Hawai'i's working families and the community. Please support HB547 HD1.

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 2:12:04 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nhi Hoan Quach	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill and I implore you to do so too. Investing in Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals is an investment in Hawaii's local human infrastructure and economy.

Research has shown that healthy development in the first 5 years of a child's life sets them up for success, and while many factors contribute to what is healthy. The people and access to care is at the center and perhaps most important. We need to give our early childhood professionals living wages so they can focus on providing quality care that we ourselves cannot do as we too need to work and contribute to the economy. We need to prepare for the workforce of tomorrow and it starts with quality care of our keiki and the people we entrust to care for them.

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 12:14:16 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kira Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kakou,

My ohana and I are in full support of HB 547 Relating to Early Child Care. I am a social worker and therapist on Hawaii Island; this is a community mental health issue. Early child care should be a public good. We should be a community that supports everybody from womb to tomb; supporting early child care workers with a living wage would help retain workers in a system that is losing workers every day. This is a problem that has only been exacerbated by the pandemic as we saw child care centers close. As a new parent I was horrified and traumatized to discover how many pukas our system has, especially compared to other countries like Sweden, where maternity and paternity care and the education system are phenomenal. The work our childcare workers do is absolutely imperative to a healthy community, yet they are grievously underpaid. Early child care workers teach our keiki socio-emotional skills (among sooo many other skills), which enable them to understand, express, and manage their emotions and connect to other people, which research has shown better supports them in learning reading, writing, math, and science. 90% of our children's brains are formed before the age of 5, yet the workers who educate and nurture the smallest children are sometimes paid \$13 an hour. This is horrendous!

When I became pregnant, I got a full 12-weeks of paid maternity leave, which many other families do not receive, but it was not enough; this is part of a system that could do so much more to support ohana. This meant I had to find private childcare (basically for a fetus), which ended up costing more than my entire monthly rent. I ended up unexpectedly staying home with my child until we could afford care at a highly subsidized child care center; many of my peers with Master's degrees and careers also ended up making the difficult family, professional, and financial decision to stay home. We were raised by our grandparents, but the Social Security age and cost of living have risen, so many of my generation's parents were not able to retire and help raise our keiki. Honestly, staying home with young keiki was harder work than my actual paid full-time job as a social worker, so I have a deep appreciation for our early child-care workers that took care of my keiki. These are the workers that worked through the pandemic with the most huggy and hannah-battah keiki. Even though our child care workers do much of their work out of love, a labor of love is still LABOR, so pay them well! When you support early child care workers, when you fund public early child care centers, when you support families and the people who support families, you uplift the entire community. You build a future workforce that has healthy socio-emotional skills; you build a workforce that will be able to care for your generation as you become kupuna.

I also wanted to add that Early Child Care, Pre-school, and K-12 Kumu who work in Hawaiian Language Immersion should continue to be supported with even more raises as we have seen too many of our young, hard-working, grounded and super-educated kumu move on to jobs in food service or other higher paying fields because they cannot live sustainably on an early childhood educator's income.

Child care, pre-school, and pre-k education should be a public good, along with paid maternity/paternity leave, and care through the whole lifespan, including caregiver support and kupuna support. Pay early child care workers well! We support HB 547!

Mahalo,

Kira Lee

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 12:20:59 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marissa E. Ku'uipo Baptista	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an actively voting resident of Hawai'i and a member of the Salt Lake community, I support this bill.

Aloha e Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the HHS, LBT and WAM committees:

I am writing in **strong support** of HB547 HD1.

Our child care workforce is grossly overpaid, especially considering the importance of the work they do. The first two years represents the most sensitive period of the lifespan. Responsive, skillful, loving and stable teachers are one of the best forms of insurance we can provide to families that their children will have a strong foundation for lifelong health and learning.

Our infant-toddler workforce is in crisis. Hawaii's child care and early learning system was insufficient to meet state needs before the COVID pandemic and has yet to recover the capacity lost during that period. Many programs are running under licensed capacity because they cannot find qualified staff. It is heartbreaking each time I hear from a center director that another staff member had to leave the classroom for a better-paying, unskilled position in order to support their own family.

My own research as a UH faculty member shows that even at full capacity, we have enough child care seats to serve about 3% of our infants and 12% of all 1- and 2-year-old children. This compares to over 50% of all 3- and 4-year-olds. The majority of Hawaii's young children live in home where are residential parents work. Your constituents need child care.

Increased pay will should attract and retain the infant-toddler workforce we sorely need. This pilot program will provide a good idea of how effective wage subsidies can be, especially if the pilot includes an evaluation.



To: Hawaii State House Committees on Health and Human Services  
plus Labor and Technology

Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, March 20, 2023, 3:00pm

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 224 & Videoconference

Re: Judith Ann Armstrong is in strong support of HB547 HD1 to Increase Child Care Wages.

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

I, Judith Ann Armstrong, am in strong support of HB547 HD1 Relating to Early Child Care.

- Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state.
- Preschools, childcare providers, and families already carry a heavy burden. We cannot carry more without your support.
- Please support the creation of a childcare worker subsidy pilot program. It is the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for me, my family, and my community.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB547.

Sincerely,

Judith Ann Armstrong

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 6:36:37 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Allison Mikuni	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB547 HD1, for a subsidy pilot program for infant and toddler childcare workers. Many of them are ALICE workers, living in low-income and affordable housing. They provide high-quality essential services to our children, who are the future of this State, and our families, who are struggling to support them. Infant and toddler childcare workers should be compensated with a fair and equitable living wage in exchange for the time and energy they expend in caring for the next generation. This in turn will support the vastly underfunded network of childcare facilities in our state.

Allison Mikuni; Palolo, Oahu Resident

March 19, 2023

To: The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno Chair  
The Honorable Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

From: Ariel Mateo  
Early Childhood Educator Specialist with an emphasis in Infant and Toddler

Subject: Measure: HB 547 Relating to Early Childcare  
Hearing Date: March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Time: 3:00 pm  
Location: Room CR224 & Videoconference

As an Early Childhood Educator who works directly with infants and toddlers, **I support the intent of HB 547.**

In the 10 years I worked in the field, I observed that when people hear “Early Childhood” they often think of children ranging from PreK or kindergarten and up. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children and other professional groups, Early Childhood is the period of life from birth to the age of eight years. We can’t forget how important the youngest and most vulnerable ages birth to three are. The Harvard University Center on Developing Child (2019) states:

Early experiences affect the development of **brain architecture**, which provides the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health. Just as a weak foundation compromises the quality and strength of a house, adverse experiences early in life can impair brain architecture, with negative effects lasting into adulthood(.) . . . In the first few years of life, more than 1 million new neural connections are form every second. After this period of rapid proliferation, connections are reduced through a process called pruning, which allows brain circuits to become more efficient(.) . . . A major ingredient in this developmental process is the serve and return interaction between children and their parents and other caregivers in the family or community. In the absence of responsive caregiving—or if responses are unreliable or inappropriate—the brain’s architecture does not form as expected, which can lead to disparities in learning and behavior. (para.1-3, 4).

Everything in the few sentences above validates the importance of access to infant and toddler care provided by a well prepared and compensated workforce. If we care for our future, our keiki in Hawai’i, we must invest in their well-being and development. Critical to their care, is investing in the people who are caring for them on the frontline. They interact with infants and toddlers during most of their waking hours while their parents and loved ones are at work. If families cannot find consistent, responsive, intentional caregivers, we all bear the consequences now and for in the future.

Better compensation is needed to enable those with a passion, a subsidy that will enable them to earn a living wage so that they can stay in the field. While I support the intent of the bill and appreciate any subsidy, I might suggest that lawmakers provide subsidies in a manner that compensates infant toddler specialists equitably with other simliarly credentialed or degreed educators.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a testimony in support of HB 547. **I strongly support this measure** and respectfully ask that educators of our youngest children receive professional recognition equal to that of other educators.

Pengine , W. (2019, August 20). *Brain architecture*. Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. Retrieved June 19, 2019, from <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 3:47:41 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kee Lo	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs and members of the committees,  
To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms. Please support the creation of a child care worker subsidy pilot program as the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

Hawai‘i’s early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. In piloting solutions, we want to start with those most likely to be farthest from fair wages. A 2022 study completed by the University of Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project showed that on average between \$13 and \$17 per hour. National trends suggest that the younger the child is that you care for and educate the lower your pay is likely to be.

Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. Because Hawai‘i’s early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good, it requires public investment.

We have to start somewhere with wage increases; starting with our early childhood care and education professionals who are most likely to be farthest from fair wages makes sense. Starting with our infant and toddler child care providers also helps families access quality care from the time babies need it most.

Please support this measure.

Kee Lo

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 5:19:38 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Erica Yamauchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair, Vice Chair and members of the Committee:

I am writing today as a mother of two children who desperately wants to see more done to support working families in our state.

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. We need to do better by them, and invest in our keiki and families for the long term.

Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. We cannot carry more without your support.

We are urging you to support a child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for me, my family, and my community.

Thank you.

Erica Yamauchi, Kaimukī/Wilhelmina Rise

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 8:02:02 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Julie Reyes Oda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

**HB-547-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 4:49:35 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Regina Blanchard-Walker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.