



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

January 31, 2023

**TO:** Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair  
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

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

**SUBJECT: Measure:** H.B. No. 547 – RELATING TO CHILD CARE  
**Hearing Date:** Thursday, February 2, 2023  
**Time:** 9:00 am  
**Location:** Conference Room 329

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

EOEL supports the intent of H.B. No. 547 and defers to the Department of Human Services regarding implementation and provisions set forth in this bill.

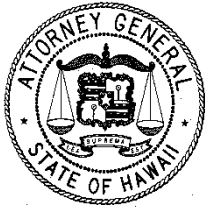
EOEL is committed to increasing access to early learning opportunities while building the infrastructure needed to make sure the State's investment reaps the intended returns. One of the things we've learned from our program, as well as our collaborative work across private and public partners in the field, is that most of us cannot find enough qualified staff.

Challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff are a significant barrier to sustaining the early learning workforce. **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, 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.

The median wage of child care workers in Hawaii ranges from \$13 and \$17 per hour, with national trends suggesting that the younger the age of the child being served, the lower the pay for those educators. Furthermore, 16 percent of child care workers are living in poverty, compared to the 10 percent of the general population in Hawaii (Early Childhood Workforce Index, 2020). 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. EOEL supports the intention of the bill to focus on those who service our youngest keiki as those 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 the opportunity to testify on this bill.



**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**  
H.B. NO. 547, EARLY CHILD CARE.

**BEFORE THE:**  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

**DATE:** Thursday, February 2, 2023      **TIME:** 9:00 a.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 329

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

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Chair Mizuno and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

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

The bill provides an appropriation of public money, on page 4, lines 3-8, for the purpose of providing subsidies to infant and toddler child care workers working in licensed infant and toddler centers. Article VII, section 4, of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii provides that, "[n]o grant of public money or property shall be made except pursuant to standards provided by law." This bill does not include standards by which the Department of Human Services is to distribute the funds to program participants. We therefore recommend that this bill be amended to insert sufficient standards for the Department of Human Services to distribute the funds appropriated in this bill as subsidies to infant and toddler child care workers working in licensed infant and toddler centers. Examples of existing statutes that provide standards for agencies to expend funds are part II of chapter 9, and sections 10-17, 210D-11, and 383-128, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which provide standards for the administrative grant of public money. Additionally, we have attached draft standards to this testimony as a sample to work from and we are happy to work with you on developing more specific standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

**POSSIBLE STANDARDS FOR THE GRANTS IN THIS BILL**

**I. DEFINITIONS**

**Definitions.** As used in this Act, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

"Department" means the department of human services.

"Private educational institution" means a non-public entity that provides: (1) educational services for any grades from kindergarten through grade twelve; (2) post-secondary education; or (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.

"Recipient" means a child care provider receiving a subsidy.

"Subsidy" means an award of state funds to a specified recipient to support the activities of the recipient and permit the community to benefit from those activities.

**II. APPLICATIONS**

**Applications for subsidies.** Requests for subsidies shall be submitted to the department in accordance with the administrative rules adopted by the department to administer the subsidy program. Each request shall at a minimum state:

- (1) The name of the child care provider requesting a subsidy;
- (2) The subsidy amount being requested; and
- (3) The age range of the children that the child care provider serves.

**III. STANDARDS**

**Qualifying standards for grant funds.** A child care provider applying for a subsidy shall meet the following

standards; specifically, the applicant shall provide proof that the applicant:

- (1) Has United States citizenship or permanent United States resident alien status and is a resident of the State of Hawaii at the time of application;
- (2) Is currently licensed or registered as a child care provider, or is an exempt provider approved by the department;
- (3) Provides infant and toddler child care at the time of application;
- (4) Complies with other federal, state, or county statutes, rules, or ordinances, necessary to conduct the activities or provide the services for which a grant is awarded;
- (5) Complies with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disability;
- (6) Agrees not to use state funds for entertainment or lobbying activities;
- (7) Allows the department, legislative committees and their staff, and the auditor full access to their records, reports, files, and other related documents and information for purposes of monitoring, measuring the effectiveness, and ensuring the proper expenditure of the grant;
- (8) Is employed by a child care facility that is not part of or owned or operated by or as a private educational institution;
- (9) Satisfies any other standards that may be required by the source of funding; and

- (10) Meets all other standards prescribed in rules adopted by the department to implement the subsidy.

#### **IV. REVIEW OF APPLICATION**

**Required review of requests for subsidies.** (a) Every request for subsidies shall be reviewed in accordance with this section.

(b) Every request for a subsidy shall be submitted to the department on an application form provided by the department. Each application shall at a minimum contain the information in section [\_\_].

(c) The department shall review each request to determine whether the applicant is eligible to receive a subsidy.

(d) The department shall make a final decision on each request.

(e) The department shall inform each subsidy applicant of the disposition of the application's request.

(f) The appeal process in the department's rules shall be available for any applicant who is denied a request for subsidy.

#### **V. CONTRACTS**

**Contracts.** The department shall not release the public funds approved for a grant unless a contract is entered into between the department and the recipient of the grant. The department shall develop and determine, in consultation with and subject to the review and approval of the attorney general, the specific contract form to be used.

#### **VI. ALLOTMENT**

**Allotment.** Appropriations for subsidies to be made under this Act shall be subject to the allotment system generally applicable to all appropriations made by the legislature.

**VII. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

**Monitoring and evaluation.** (a) Every department subsidy contract shall be monitored by the department to ensure compliance with this part.

(b) Every department subsidy contract shall be evaluated annually to determine whether the subsidy attained the intended results in the manner contemplated.

**VIII. DUTY TO DISCLOSE AND PENALTY**

**Continued eligibility.** Any recipient of a subsidy who withholds or omits any material fact or deliberately misrepresents facts to the department shall be in violation of this part. In addition to any other penalties provided by law, any recipient found by the department to have violated this part or the terms of its contract shall be prohibited from applying for any department subsidies for a period of five years from the date of termination.

**IX. RULES**

**Rules.** The department shall adopt rules, which may be done without regard to chapter 91, to administer the child care worker subsidy pilot program.

Feb. 1, 2023

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair  
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

Subject: **Measure** - HB 547 RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE  
**Hearing Date** - Feb. 2, 2023  
**Time** - 9:00 AM  
**Location** - Conference Room 329

**I am in support of HB 547.**

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.

Every young child deserves a high-quality early childhood program, staffed by well-prepared, well-supported, and well-compensated early care and education (ECE) professionals. However, low wages, limited benefits, and poor working conditions, have made it very difficult to recruit and retain early educators.

To better understand these issues, the project I lead at the UH at Mānoa commissioned the RAND Corporation to study early educators in licensed child care centers and regulated family child care homes and found that on average they earn between \$13 and \$17 per hour.

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.

In fact, Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. 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.**



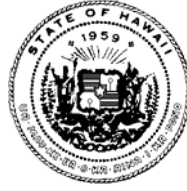
We have to start somewhere with wage increases; starting with our early childhood care and education professionals who are most likely to be farthest from fair wages makes sense. Starting with our infant and toddler child care providers also helps families access quality care from the time babies need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

HB 547 requires Department of Human Services 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. This bill appropriates funds for the pilot program.

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.

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

February 1, 2023February 1, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 547 – RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE.**

Hearing: February 2, 2023, 9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 329 & Videoconferencing, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of the bill and provides comments. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

**PURPOSE:** The bill's purpose 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.

Another consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic is a national and local decline in the early child care workforce. DHS works with licensed child care providers and community stakeholders to strategize ways to retain and recruit qualified infant and toddler caregivers.

While Congress authorized COVID-19 pandemic federal funds to subsidize child care wages, we are consulting with federal advisors about how the Child Care Development Fund or

the Child Care Development Block Grant may be used to subsidize wages for contracted child care slots.<sup>1</sup> DHS will update the testimony as we receive additional information.

DHS respectfully requests the following amendment to avoid violating the State Constitution:

- Section 2, page 2, at lines 15-17, "Participants shall not be employed by the Department of Education, public charter schools, [~~or~~] federally funded early head start program, or a private educational institution;"

At this time, DHS does not have the capacity to issue payments directly to each eligible child care worker for the proposed two-year pilot period. Instead, the licensed infant and toddler child care centers will be responsible for disbursing the subsidized participant's wages and ensuring that all participants are paid wages of at least \$16.00 per hour. DHS will work with and ensure that licensed infant and toddler child care centers appropriately provide the subsidized portion of their employees' wages.

If the measure passes, DHS respectfully 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 to establish and implement the infant and toddler child care worker subsidy pilot program.

As the measure progresses, DHS will provide cost estimates to establish, implement, and administer the child care worker subsidy pilot program.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Note: we received additional information after submitting testimony HB 502.

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 11:17:31 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Khara Jabola-Carolus	Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Honorable Members,

HSCSW strongly supports HB547 to stem the childcare educator crisis, and asks that the Committee pass this measure.

Mahalo



To: House Committee on Human Services  
Hearing Date/Time: February 2, 2023 9AM  
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 329  
Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 547

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and the Members of Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 547 which would establish a two-year infant and toddler child care worker subsidy pilot program within the department of human services and appropriate funds to assist in retaining the existing child care workforce.

Hawaii would need over 9,300 early childhood educators and we currently have closer to 4,000. Hawaii needs to increase the wages of the early childhood educators to recruit and retain the workforce. Going from no supplemental program to providing supplements for all will take time and a pilot would provide the experience required to fully implement the wage subsidy program.

Without the childcare capacity, more women in Hawaii will be forced to leave the labor force. Women already shoulder a disproportionate burden of child care responsibilities: about 27% of mothers stay at home (versus 7% fathers), three fourth of the mothers who stay at home do so to care for family (versus one fourth of the fathers) according to a 2018 survey from Pew Research. Being forced to leave the labor force to do unpaid care work limits women's advancement and corresponding pay increases, contributing to the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap also continues into retirement, with the 2019 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey showing a nearly 30% difference in total retirement income between men and women. There are serious and disproportionate financial barriers to seniors aging in place and avoiding institutionalization.

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. UH Hilo, UH Manoa, UH Maui College, and Windward Community College are also AAUW partners. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity for equal opportunities in education, at workplace and for economic security, and in leadership.*

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists supports HB547. The intent of this bill is to ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to Kindergarten by improving pay for the professionals who work in those classrooms. We support this measure as a first step toward supporting early childhood care and education professionals.

The benefits of high quality early childhood care and education are well-researched by Dr. James Heckman, Nobel-Prize winning economist at the University of Chicago. His research has demonstrated that high-quality, birth-to-five early childhood education yields a 13% return on investment and a higher rate of return than preschool alone. His research has also demonstrated that skills developed in such programs last for a lifetime ([www.heckmangequation.org](http://www.heckmangequation.org))

Respectfully Submitted:

Alec Marentic, NCSP

*HASP President*

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 1/31/2023 1:54:13 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Barbara H Ozaki	SMALL WORLD PRESCHOOL	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. 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 me, my family and my community.

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 1/31/2023 3:18:20 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Doris Segal Matsunaga	Save Medicaid Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii supports HB 547





To: Representative Mizuno, Chair  
Representative Amato, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

Re: HB547, relating to early child care  
9:00 a.m., Feb. 2, 2023

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato and committee members:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of House Bill 547, 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.** Families will tell you that when they make their choices about child care one of the biggest priorities is the people who do the work of early care and education.

Too often though, these critical professionals do not make a living wage. In 2020, a study found that **1 in 3 child care workers faced food insecurity.** A 2022 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. This is significantly below what's needed for a living wage. Nationally, we see that **those caring for and educating our youngest children—birth through 2 years old—tend to make the least of all child care workers and early childhood educators.**

**Early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good that deserves public investment.** They help children build critical skills that they'll rely on their entire lives. Infant and toddler care and education professionals are especially important. A child's most rapid brain development happens between birth and three. The professionals who care for and educate them help infants and toddlers build vital skills that lay the foundation for lifelong education—building foundations in 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 families 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. Even more left the field during the pandemic. Nationally, more than 7% of the workforce have not returned. This means that **over the last five years, we have likely lost a quarter of the early childhood care and education workforce.**

We need to retain 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.

This bill is a crucial step forward in raising 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 be farthest from fair wages. **It also helps identify a portion of the workforce small enough for DHS to be able to innovate solutions to implementing this program long-term.** We hope that if this pilot program is successful, it can be implemented for early childhood care and education professionals across the birth to kindergarten continuum.

We recognize that HB547 and HB391 are very similar. The most important components of what we believe it takes for a successful program are in each of the bills. Thus, we do not have a preference on which of the bills moves forward. **We urge this committee to advance a measure that will establish a pilot program specifically for lead caregivers, caregivers and child care aides in licensed infant and toddler centers.**

Mahalo,

Ke'ōpū Reelitz  
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy



Date: February 1, 2023

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

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for HB547, 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**, 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. ECAS supports this wage subsidy measure for infant and toddler child care providers as a critical first step toward supporting the early care and education workforce as a whole.

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



# holomua

COLLECTIVE

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## OUR MISSION

Make Hawai'i more affordable for all working families.

## OUR VISION

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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HolomuaCollective.org

**Committee:** House Committee on Human Services  
**Bill Number:** HB 547, Relating to Early Child Care  
**Hearing Date and Time:** February 2, 2023 at 9:00am (Room 329)  
**Re:** Testimony of Holomua Collective in support

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Committee Members:

We write in support of HB 547, Relating to Early Child Care. The purpose of HB 547 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 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 are proud to support it

We recognize that HB 547 and HB 391 are similar bills, and support passage of both or either vehicle. We appreciate the opportunity to testify.

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).



TO:

Rep. J. Mizuno, Chair

Rep. T. Amato, Vice Chair

Human Services Committee Members

FROM:

Brenda Watanabe, VP Public Policy, HiAEYC Board

SUBJECT: Measure: HB547 – RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE

Hearing Date: February 2, 2023

Time: 9:00am

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The mission of the Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children (HiAEYC) is to promote, support, and expand quality and professionalism in early childhood programs and services for Hawai'i's young children (birth to age 8) and their families." HiAEYC is the Hawai'i affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve compensation for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms. Early care and education professionals should be provided equitable salaries and benefits commensurate with their qualifications, experience and job responsibilities. Equitable compensation will help reduce turnover in staffing and keep qualified staff in the field. Please support the creation of an infant and toddler child care worker subsidy pilot program as the first step toward improving wages for our professionals who provide a public good, therefore require public investment.

HiAEYC strongly supports this measure and requests this measure be passed. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share our views and provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Watanabe,

VP of Public Policy,

HiAEYC Board

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 11:23:59 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nadege Powers	Parent Participation Nursery School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Nadege Powers support the HB547 Bill but not only for infant and toddler but for all in ECE settings especailly in Group Child Care. Retaining, finding, compensating staff is challenging as the base pay is so minimal. To think that an aide cant offer to live on her/his own with what they currently make. ECE teachers/ admnistrators are much under pay. Please make preschools universal so we can offer to pay our staff much more than \$20 per hour.

Thank you.



## HIPHI Board

Misty Pacheco, DrPH  
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Medical-Legal Partnership  
For Children in Hawai'i

Garret Sugai  
HMSA

Kathleen Roche, MS, RN, CENP  
Kaiser Permanente

May Okihiro, MD, MS  
John A. Burns School of Medicine,  
Department of Pediatrics

Titiimaea Ta'ase, JD  
State of Hawai'i, Deputy Public  
Defender

## HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a  
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community Health  
Worker Initiative

COVID-19 Response

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol Free  
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective

Date: Thursday, February 1, 2023

To: Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair  
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Human Services

Re: Support for HB 547, Relating to Early Childhood Education

Hrg: Thursday, February 2, 2023, at 9:00 AM, Conf Rm 329

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The Hawai'i Public Health Institute<sup>i</sup> (HIPHI), **supports HB 547**, which seeks to retain our early childhood workforce by establishing a two-year infant and toddler childcare worker subsidy pilot program.

**Strong communities are supported when people are possible when people are paid their worth.**

Families are in dire need to find childcare for their children for the years from birth to kindergarten. The workforce who cares for children is dwindling due to the intense job demands and the meager pay.

Working families need childcare, and childcare workers need to be compensated fairly. Health improves with increasing income, and the impacts of a rise in income are most significant for those at the lowest end of the wage scale. Research shows that those who move from the lowest income level to the next receive the most significant percentage increase in life expectancy and health status.

According to the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, from 2018 to 2020, Hawai'i lost 20% of its childcare workforce—from 4,260 to 3,410 in the early childhood teaching workforce<sup>ii</sup>. Then during the COVID-19 pandemic, the workforce dwindled even more employees left for various reasons. We need to invest in professionals who provide a public good. Families need care for their young children. Every sector has seen dwindling employee numbers, and we need to invest in ways people can return to work.

Early childcare workers are critical to our economy. They need to be recognized for their essential service so families can work. Ensuring that all employees are being compensated for their work lifts up the health of communities by improving income and food security, decreasing stress, improving nutrition, increasing housing stability, and more. Communities of residents with higher incomes are likely to have



better housing, food access, schools, recreational amenities, and tend to be safer – all of which impact health. Income is also associated with other factors that create the opportunity to be healthy include employment opportunities, reduced environmental contamination, and more transportation options.

Thank you for this opportunity to SUPPORT HB 547.

Mahalo,

*Peggy Mierzwa*

Peggy Mierzwa  
Advocacy and Policy Director  
Hawaii Public Health Insititute

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<sup>i</sup> Created by the legislature in 2012, the Obesity Prevention Task Force is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations, and works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and healthcare environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents. The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) convenes the Task Force and supports and promotes policy efforts to create a healthy Hawai'i.

Hawai'i Public Health Institute is a hub for building healthy communities, providing issue-based advocacy, education, and technical assistance through partnerships with government, academia, foundations, business, and community-based organizations.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/>

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 1/31/2023 12:45:49 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Heidi Allencastre	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

It takes a special type of person to have the passion and patience to be a childcare provider. It is important that they be compensated for their time and skills. If they are leaving the workforce to find other jobs that pay more this should be a concern on all of our radar.

Please support this bill!

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 1/31/2023 2:39:17 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Erin ODonnell	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. 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 me, my family and my community.
- Our future rests in the hands of folks who make some of the lowest wages in our state, please, support our keiki by supporting those who work with them to make a livable wage.

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 1/31/2023 3:12:09 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ryan Samonte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support!

- 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. 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 me, my family and my community.

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 1/31/2023 5:10:55 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raya Esteban	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato and committee members,

Please support HB547, 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

To: Hawaii State House Committee on Health and Human Services  
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 2, 2023, 9:00am  
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 329 & Videoconference  
Re: Judith Ann Armstrong is in strong support of HB547 to Increase Child Care Wages.

Dear Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

I, Judith Ann Armstrong, am in strong support of HB547 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

Committee on Human Resources  
The Hawaii State House of Representatives  
415 S Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: SUPPORT HB391 & HB547

January 31, 2023

Dear Chair John M. Mizuno, Vice Chair Terez Amato, and esteemed members of the Committee on Human Resources,

I am writing to ask that you SUPPORT BILLS [HB 391](#) & [HB 547](#), which seek to implement subsidies to retain qualified child care workers nurturing our youngest of keiki.

As an educator in higher education and a parent of two children of my own, I know first hand how necessary qualified, caring child care workers are. In the wake of the pandemic, a number of our workers still have not come back to working full time due to parental obligations. The limited number of child care workers and slots for children, paired with the high cost of living and care make navigating child care decisions difficult at best.

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 your support. The creation of a child care worker subsidy pilot program would provide the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for me, my family and my community. Let's make sure to incentivize workers nurturing our young keiki to stay by paying them living and competitive wages. Hopefully, this will result in more of our children attaining loving care from workers that truly enjoy their jobs, feel valued, and want to stay in their chosen vocation.

For all these reasons and more, I strongly SUPPORT BILLS [HB 391](#) & [HB 547](#). Mahalo nui for introducing and hearing these bills!

Sincerely,



Erika Molyneux  
Mother of two, Resident of Kaneohe, Hawai'i  
Instructor, New Media Arts, Leeward Community College



**HB-547**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 3:11:08 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexandra Chou	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the increase

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 8:46:37 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Malia Tsuchiya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Malia Tsuchiya

Before the Hawai‘i State Legislature

Committee on Human Services

Feb, 02, 2023

Honolulu, Hawai‘i

Committee of Human Services

9:00 Am

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 329

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

**HB547**

Requires the department of human services 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.

**IN FAVOR**

Aloha e Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato and respected members of the Committee of Human Services,

Thank you for your time and for allowing me to submit testimony **IN FAVOR of HB 547**. My name is Malia Tsuchiya. I am a mother of five children, ranging in ages 17-2. I am also a preschool teacher and family childcare provider by trade and have spent many years helping organizations and individuals to meet state and national requirements for childcare accreditation and licensing. I humbly request for the committee to please vote **IN FAVOR** of HB 547 for the following reasons:

HB 547 will help to stabilize an already scarce workforce by potentially increasing the retention rate for Infant Toddler caregivers and incentivizing new caregivers to enter the field. HB 547 will help to decrease the gap between pay and living wages and assist in providing the much needed funding that will allow caregivers to provide for their most basic needs. Through this legislation Hawai'i has the opportunity to increase the quality of care by ensuring that our caregivers' basic needs are met and in turn, the care they provide is not overshadowed by their own economic disparities.

Infant toddler care is an act of love. It takes a very kind, special and dedicated person to engage in infant toddler childcare for a living. Children at this age are ever demanding and require a caregiver for every need. The task can be daunting and requires constant attentiveness. The job is ongoing, and a child's life literally depends on the quality of care that is provided. Unlike other fields, the demands of infant toddler care often require caregivers to work ten-hour days, forfeit time off and work extended hours or holidays in order to provide full time childcare for the families they serve. With long hours, constant attentiveness and poor pay it is no wonder that an estimated 30% of the workforce has left just in the last two years (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2021). If Hawai'i as a state is going to have any capability of maintaining any type of infant toddler childcare services it is essential that HB 547 be passed. Increasing the wage for infant toddler caregivers is integral to stabilizing a workforce on which lives literally depend.

Hawai'i's infant toddler caregivers are among the lowest paid in the nation (RAND study 2022). This fact creates alarm when we consider the duality of our high cost of living. At present, Hawai'i's ECE3 project estimates an average childcare worker pay of \$13-\$17 per hour. With infant toddler caregivers by average being paid the least. By [HUD income limits](#) this would put the majority of infant childcare workers at the 'very low income' range. Hawai'i families depend

on childcare and deserve quality childcare. In a state where words like ‘Kuleana’ ‘Mālama’ and ‘Ohana’ seem to be our hallmarks the state of our current childcare worker wages presents a much different picture. If we are to align our outward actions as a state with our internal value systems it essential that HB 547 be passed so that our families, children and the childcare providers that serve are able to rest assured that their needs are met in a way that benefits all stakeholders.

Hawai‘i families and child care centers cannot bear the cost of increasing wages. For this reason, it is necessary for the state provide funds support for the cost of raising wages. Without raising wages, we will continue to lose this essential workforce. We will impede on family’s abilities to work and make a living. We will decrease the number of new childcare workers to the field and will continue to see the spread of ‘childcare deserts’ throughout the state. Hawai‘i’s young families in particular, are moving away at disheartening rates. The cost and challenge of childcare is often said as a reason for this. We have to make quality childcare accessible and affordable to families. To do this we must stabilize and increase our workforce. Infant toddler wages are good place to start and though this is a small population to start with, a small start is better than no start at all.

Please vote **IN FAVOR OF HB 547.**

Thank you dearly to all committee members, and bill sponsors for this opportunity. Be well.  
Aloha kekahi I kekahi.

With Respect,

Malia Tsuchiya

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 8:52:26 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato and committee members,

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**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 10:43:29 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tiffany Kasoga	Leeward Community College	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- 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 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 me, my family, and my community.

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 8:37:39 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maya Maxym	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato and committee members,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 547. As a pediatrician and a mom, I understand both the ways in which excellent childcare supports the developing brains of infants and toddlers and the importance of safe, reliable childcare for working parents. Childcare workers are some of the most underpaid professionals in our society, yet they provide an absolutely essential -- and precious -- service to our keiki and their families. This pilot subsidy for childcare workers who care for infants and toddlers would represent a significant step towards bringing their pay up in the direction of a living wage in our high cost of living state without placing additional burdens on families, who are also struggling to pay for childcare, which may exceed \$20,000 per year per child.

On behalf of myself and the many patients and families I have seen struggling with childcare scarcity over the years, I thank you in advance for your consideration and hope you will support moving this bill out of committee.

Mahalo,

Maya Maxym, MD, PhD

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 8:45:07 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brooke Hallett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato and committee members,

I am a pediatrician in Honolulu and my patients need better access to early childhood care and education. I see too many children whose parents cannot go back to work, cannot make healthcare appointments, because they lack childcare. I see children with language delays that could have been improved with quality childcare and education.

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.

**HB-547**

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 10:29:53 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/2/2023 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Committee Members,

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 childcare worker subsidy pilot program as the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals in Hawai'i.

Our 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, 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.

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. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Erica Yamauchi, Kaimukī/Wilhelmina Rise