



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

February 13, 2023

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

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

**SUBJECT:** **Measure:** S.B. No. 312 – RELATING TO CHILD CARE WORKERS  
**Hearing Date:** Wednesday, February 15, 2023  
**Time:** 1:00 pm  
**Location:** Conference Room 225

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

EOEL supports the intent of S.B. No. 312 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.

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

FROM: Robert G. Peters, Chair  
Early Learning Board

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 312 – RELATING TO CHILD CARE WORKERS

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2023

Time: 1:00 pm

Location: Conference Room 225

EARLY LEARNING BOARD POSITION: Support the Intent

The Early Learning Board (ELB) supports the intent of S.B. No. 312 and defers to the Department of Human Services regarding implementation and provisions set forth in this bill.

The ELB supports the EOEL's commitment 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 key elements of that infrastructure is a competent workforce who can provide the type of care built upon trusting adult relationships that nurture growth and development. The current childcare and learning situation statewide reflects the challenges faced in both the private and public sectors attracting and retaining a qualified workforce to meet our community needs and provide the needed nurturing to support the development of our keiki.

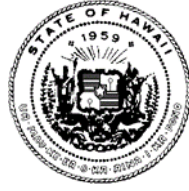
Despite working in a specialized field with health, safety, and educational requirements and having higher levels of education than the average American worker (Whitebook et al., 1990), many early childhood care and education providers remain at the second or third percentile in the Bureau of Labor and 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.

Increasing compensation is an effective way to increase recruitment and retention of a qualified early learning workforce. Given that Hawaii's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state, the ELB supports the intention of the bill to focus on those who service our youngest keiki as they are most likely to be furthest from fair wages.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony in support of the intent of S.B. No. 312.

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 13, 2023

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

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 312 – RELATING TO CHILD CARE WORKERS**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 1:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 225, 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 administer a two-year Infant and Toddler Child Care Worker Subsidy Pilot Program. Requires annual reports on the pilot program's development and administration to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the decline in the early child care workforce across the nation and locally. DHS works with licensed child care providers and community stakeholders to strategize ways to retain and recruit qualified infant and toddler caregivers.

Congress authorized COVID-19 pandemic federal funds to subsidize child care wages, and we are working with our federal advisors on ways that the Child Care and Development Fund may be used as supplemental payments to providers to support subsidizing licensed infant and toddler center staff wages.

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

- Section 2, page 2, at lines 6-8, “Prohibited to child care workers employed by the department of education, state public charter school commission, [~~or an~~] Early Head Start provider, or a private educational institution;”.

DHS will also consult with the Attorney General’s Office to include standards by which DHS is to distribute the funds to program participants consistent with Article VII, section 4 of the State Constitution.

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 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 all 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 of 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.



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

---

**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

S.B. NO. 312, RELATING TO CHILD CARE WORKERS.

**BEFORE THE:**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 15, 2023      **TIME:** 1:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 225

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

---

Chair San Buenaventura 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 infant and toddler child care worker subsidy pilot program to retain existing early child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler center settings. It also appropriates funds for the infant and toddler child care worker subsidy pilot program.

The bill provides an appropriation of public money, on page 3, lines 11-17, 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 an infant and toddler 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 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.



*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

Re: SB312, relating to child care workers  
1:00 p.m., Feb. 15, 2023

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and members of the committee:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **Senate Bill 312, relating to child care workers.**

**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 professionals doing 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 years old. 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 family members to go to work. **They are the workforce behind so many other workforces.**



*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.*

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. SB312 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 implement 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.

As the state continues its work to expand early childhood care and education options for families, we must focus on rebuilding the workforce. **It makes sense to start with the workforce educating and caring for our youngest, age birth to 3, and then expand to the entire early childhood care and education system. Please support SB312.**

Mahalo,

Ke'ōpū Reelitz  
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy



# holomua

COLLABORATIVE

---

## OUR MISSION

Build an ever-growing cross-sector coalition working together to advance public policies that make Hawai'i affordable for all working families.

## OUR VISION

Positive, sustainable, and evidence-based public policies that are created through collaboration to make Hawai'i affordable for all working families.

---

## 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*

---

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

+1 (808) 909-3843  
info@holomuacollaborative.org

HolomuaCollaborative.org

---

Page 1 of 2

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
**Bill Number:** SB 312, Relating to Child Care Workers  
**Hearing Date and Time:** February 15, 2023 at 1:00pm (Room 225)  
**Re:** Testimony of Holomua Collaborative in support

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

We write in support of SB 312, Relating to Child Care Workers. The purpose of SB 312 is to have the Department of Human Services develop a two-year infant and toddler 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 for 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 SB 312 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 a 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. It is critical to make 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. This ultimately 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 appreciate the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Josh Wisch  
President & Executive Director

---

<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: February 13, 2023

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

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for SB312, Relating to Child Care Workers

---

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 SB312**, 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 critical *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 SB312**.





HAWAI'I STATE  
COALITION AGAINST  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

February 15, 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

Re: SB312 Relating to Child Care Workers

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) addresses domestic violence's social, political, and economic impacts 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 supporting SB312. 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 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



**BUILDBETTER.LIVEBETTER.®**

February 13, 2023

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
**Bill Number:** SB 312, Relating to Child Care Workers  
**Hearing Date and Time:** February 15, 2023 at 1:00pm  
**Re:** Testimony of HPM Building Supply in support

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Committee Members:

I would like to submit this letter and written testimony in support of SB 312, Relating to the childcare worker subsidy pilot program. The purpose of SB 312 is to a pilot subsidy program to support childcare workers.

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, we offer various services and products, including retail stores, building supply and lumber yards, Home Design Centers, drafting, design, roofing, 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 exceptional customer service. 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 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.

This bill also aligns with HPM's values of Heart, Character, and Growth. By supporting early childhood workers and educators, 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.



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

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





**BUILDBETTER.LIVEBETTER.®**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 312. 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)





**Testimony to  
The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services**

**Wednesday, February 15, 2023**

**1:00 PM**

**Conference Room 225 & VIA Videoconference  
Hawaii State Capitol**

**SB 312**

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

Hawai'i Gas supports SB 312, 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—as is the case with SB 312—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 SB 312.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday February 15, 2023 1PM  
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 225  
Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 312

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and the Members of Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 312 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.

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, Kaula'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.*

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 1:52:47 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
nanci kreidman	Testifying for domestic violence action center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

thank you for giving consideration to this Measure.

child care is essential for a thriving economy.

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists supports SB312. 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*



**TITLE GUARANTY  
HAWAII**

February 14, 2023

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
**Bill Number:** SB 312, Relating to Child Care Workers  
**Hearing Date & Time:** February 15, 2023 at 1:00pm (Room 225)  
**Re:** Testimony of Title Guaranty of Hawai'i in support

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

We write in support of SB 312, Relating to Child Care Workers. 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 keep losing them.

This child care worker subsidy pilot program is a smart first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals, and we are happy to support it.

Sincerely,

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



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







**Testimony Presented to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
February 15, 2023, 1:00 p.m. (Room 225)**

**SB 312, RELATING TO CHILD CARE WORKERS**

---

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

We write in **strong support of SB 312**, in which the Department of Human Services shall develop a two-year infant and toddler child care 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 childcare for their keiki. This subsidy pilot program is a good first step at retaining top childcare 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 black ink that reads "Brandon H. Kurisu".

Brandon Kurisu  
aio Family of Companies





**TORI RICHARD®**  
HONOLULU

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

SB 312 -Relating to a Childcare worker subsidy pilot program.

Aloha Chair Buenaventura,

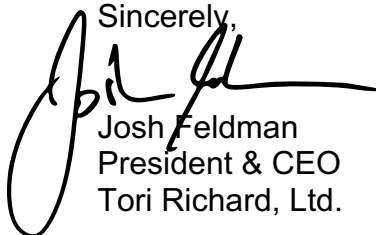
As a medium-sized Hawaii employer nearly 7 decades, in recent years we have seen many employees leave the workforce due to a lack of access to early childhood care and education. One of the greatest economic challenges facing Hawaii is ensuring our working population can afford to stay in Hawaii and 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 child care worker subsidy pilot program as the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

Hawaii'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, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. Because Hawaii'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.

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 4:43:07 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this bill!

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 7:35:51 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Kind regards, Please support and care for our children by approving this bill thank you!

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 9:01:14 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SB312 and ask this committee to pass this important legislation. I am a member of the Hawaii Children's Action Network and support the Children's Policy Agenda. This bill is part of that agenda. At a recent press conference one of our EPIC Ohana staff members spoke about how difficult it is for her to find child care for her toddler. In fact at one point she thought about leaving her employment because she was so worried about child care. We need to utilize all available strategies to remedy this situation.

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 8:26:25 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Justina Acevedo-Cross	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I have two young children and my youngest is in his last year of preschool. I have seen teachers come and go at many child care centers. I believe child care could retain their employees better if they could increase wages without increasing cost to parents.

It is important to ensure Hawaii's families have access to child care and learning 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.

Essential services like child care and learning requires public investment. Please support this measure.

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 9:33:28 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SB312. I believe that our early education and childcare workforce are criminally underpaid. They care for our children and allow the caregivers (parents, grandparents, etc) time to be employed ourselves, care for other family members, or just have a break from the mental load of actively caring for a small child constantly. These professionals have the education and background to give the children a safe environment to learn and grow to be well-rounded individuals and should be compensated for the invaluable job they do for our children. They should be able to live and thrive and go home to their families at the end of the day and not have to work a second or third job in order to make their ends meet and to provide the same care for their own family. The cost of living in Hawai`i is tremendous, and we should not allow our teachers and teaching staff to suffer for it.

This pilot program is a step in the right direction. We need to show these providers that we value them or we will lose them to more lucrative positions elsewhere. If so, we, as a society, will all suffer.

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 9:40:25 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 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 Committee Members:

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state -- yet the work they do is invaluable.

Preschools, childcare providers, and families already carry a heavy burden when it comes raising our keiki. We cannot carry more without you working alongside us to help lighten the load.

As a mother of two children, I am writing in strong support of this bill to create a childcare worker subsidy pilot program. It represents an important first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for me, my family, and our community.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Erica Yamauchi, Kaimukī/Wilhelmina Rise



**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 11:05:44 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michelle Rocca Jenkins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We must support our early childhood educators who showed up every day for our children during the pandemic.

- Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. Minimum wage is not enough to educate and prepare our children.
- Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden with high staff to child ratios. We can do more to give infants and toddlers better developmental materials, but we cannot do 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.

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:51:59 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support SB312.

I am a 69 year old Tutu and the childcare provider for my 23 month old grandson. While I love this time with my grandson, I understand that my kids cannot afford to hire the help they need to watch their son while they work. I hope the State can make the necessary changes to support our working families in Hawai'i nei.

Early childhood education is so important for these children on all levels of their development. they are our future, let's give them what they deserve and need to grow up healthy!

Mahalo,

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:16:43 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

Our preferred, renowned pre-school had five staff members. Pūnana Leo o Mānoa is one of the most desirable pre-schools in our district because it offers Hawaiian-language education. In just one year, all five staff members had left for better paying jobs.

We pulled our children out of pre-school when we realized that nearly every pre-school has this issue--dedicated, passionate staff who can't afford to work for so little money.

Pre-school would be a great career if people could afford it.

As we all know, investing in pre-K education is the cheapest way to improve a society's intelligence, value system, SEL, motor skills, language skills, etc. If we ever want to be a competitive county, state, or nation, this is a low-hanging solution.

Please make this happen. SUPPORT SB312.

Me ke aloha,

Trevor Atkins, 15th year middle school teacher

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:28:47 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this Bill and think early hood child education is VERY IMPORTANT. Our children are the future.

**TO: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**SUBJECT: SB 312 - RELATING TO CHILD CARE WORKERS**

**POSITION: IN SUPPORT**

Aloha, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning Senate Bill (SB) 312, relating to child care workers, which will support infant and toddler child care providers through a two year subsidy pilot program, raising the minimum wage for providers to \$16/hr. As a member of the community, I strongly support SB 312 as I believe that having a stable early learning framework 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 stipend 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.

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 SB 312.

Thank you,

Moevanu Jameson  
moevanu@yahoo.com

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 12:01:14 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino 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.

In the RAND study a center director said ““Retaining and finding staff is unbelievably difficult. This is due to low wages. People make more money working [in fast food] than in early childhood education. This is a disservice to staff who work hard daily and a disservice to children.”

Please support this measure.

Kee Lo



**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 12:43:13 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden living in Hawaii. If the Keiki's are our future we need to better care for this! It is my kuleana as a mom to do what I can to advocate for my keiki, and their keiki's to come!



To: Hawaii State Senate Committees on Health and Human Services

Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 1:00 pm

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 225 & Videoconference

Re: Judith Ann Armstrong is in strong support of SB 312 to establish a pilot program to subsidize wages for staff in infant and toddler centers.

Dear Members of the Health and Human Services,

I, Judith Ann Armstrong, am in strong support of SB312 relating to Child Care Workers.

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 this measure as the first step toward supporting 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, 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 must 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 childcare providers also helps families access quality care from the time babies need it most.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB1348.

Sincerely,

Judith Ann Armstrong

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:39:16 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I wholeheartedly support the creation of a child care worker subsidiary pilot program and increased pay for child care workers as a whole. Teachers are at the heart of any community and if teachers are that precious, imagine those who mold the youngest of hearts and minds. They deserve the world, the very least better pay to match the skills that are needed to wrangle 10-25 toddlers/young kids under 5 years of age. Anyone who has had to raise one knows the mental and physical strength, patience, creativity, resilience, understanding, and endurance that is required to raise tiny humans, let alone a classroom of them. The amount of support we have received from our daycare teachers/classroom aides/directors/personale is beyond what what is expected if them and astronomically beyond what they are getting paid to do. Just having our kids in daycare is a life saver as we could not survive on 1 income (as is typical in Hawaii) and both parents had to return to work after birth. The amount of thought and care they put into teaching and entertaining the kids is priceless. Please pay our daycare workers what they deserve. This is a true labor of love but love cannot pay the bills.

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:40:12 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Hirota	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino 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. This cannot happen if we are expecting these professionals to care for our youngest children. Research has shown that the most active neural connections are made in the first few years of life (Center on the Developing Child, 2012). If a child does not have a caregiver that is responsive to his/her needs, the brain’s architecture does not form properly which may lead to learning and behavioral problems later on (Center on the Developing Child, 2012). Not compensating early childhood care and education professionals will lead centers and programs to hire unqualified people to care for our youngest children without the knowledge and training needed to do this important job.

Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. Finding qualified professionals to care for my three children was a difficult and emotionally draining experience for my family. There are minimal infant and toddler centers in Hawai‘i with qualified professionals caring for these young children. When you do find a center with licensed professionals, the cost to send your child there starts at \$1,600 a month on top of the already high cost of living in Hawai‘i. **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.**

Sincerely,

Tiffany Hirota

**Reference:**

Center on the Developing Child. (2012). *Experiences build brain architecture*. [video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNNsN9IJkws>

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:06:07 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melissa W. Chong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB312 Relating to Childcare Workers. This measure will help ensure a solid workforce for early childhood programs by helping to improve pay. The information gathered through this pilot can help guide future programs.  
vote YES.

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:29:06 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Au	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino 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.** We work long hours, pay is low, and what we do matters so much for children, families and our state economy.

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

Before the pandemic and subsequent economic downturn, we were already facing a crisis as to how to provide affordable child care of high quality that is affordable to families. And infant toddler care is the hardest to find, with limited staff trained in this specific area and it is the most expensive spaces for a child care center to provide. This became worse when many programs had to cut classrooms due to staffing shortages.

Our Early Childhood Community has come together and we can turn this around, with your help. The infant toddler workforce development pilot project can make a difference and we need the help now.

Please support this measure.

Thank you

Leilani Au

Assistant Director UH Manoa Children's Center

Feb. 14, 2023

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

Subject: **Measure** – SB 312 RELATING TO CHILD CARE  
**Hearing Date** – Feb. 15, 2023  
**Time** - 1:00 PM  
**Location** - Room 225

**This testimony is in support of SB 312.**

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.

High quality child care and early learning is vital for our state's keiki, families, and communities. During the pandemic, the child care and early learning workforce became essential for our economy. However, even before the pandemic, problems of low wages, limited benefits, and poor working conditions for the early childhood workforce have existed.

To better understand these issues, the project I lead at the UH at Mānoa 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.*"

The resulting challenges of low compensation, which include high staff turnover and difficulty with recruiting individuals in joining the profession, ultimately lead to a lack of continuity of care for children and a reduction in the quality of care that is provided which affects program quality and child learning outcomes.



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 and it makes sense to start with our infant and toddler child care professionals. Infant and toddler child care professionals are in high demand and help parents go to work.

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.

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:45:11 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arvin Jeremy Tan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Please support SB 312, which would support the creation of a childcare 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.** 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.** 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 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.**

As a healthcare physician, I understand the importance of ensuring children grow up in an environment with reduced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which research shows can have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity. Children growing up with ACEs often undergo [toxic stress](#), which can cause temporary and even long-lasting changes in the human body's response systems. The number one buffer to offset the potentially permanent effects of toxic stress is warm and trusting relationships with caregivers. Unfortunately, not all children have access to these quality relationships, even within their own families. That is why it is pivotal to incentivize early-care professionals to stay in their field and to attract more highly qualified individuals to care for and educate young children. From a health perspective, we must start young to prevent physical damage in later life.

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 help families access quality care from the time babies need it most.

Please support this measure.

Mahalo,

Arvin Jeremy N. Tan, M.D.

Testimony  
Malia Tsuchiya  
Hawaii State Legislature  
Committee on Health and Human Services  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
Feb. 14, 2023

Committee On Health and Human Services  
1:00 Pm  
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

**SB 312**  
**IN FAVOR**

SB 312  
RELATING TO CHILD CARE WORKERS.

Requires the Department of Human Services to establish and administer a two-year Infant and Toddler Child Care Worker Subsidy Pilot Program. Requires annual reports on the pilot program's development and administration to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

Aloha e Chair Buenaventura and respected committee members,

Thank you for your time and for allowing me to submit testimony **IN FAVOR of SB 312**. 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 SB 312 for the following reasons:

SB 312 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. SB 312 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 SB 312 be passed. Increasing the wage for infant toddler caregivers is integral to stabilizing a workforce on which lives literally depend.

Hawaii'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.

Hawaii 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 SB 312**.

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

With Respect,

Malia Tsuchiya

**SB-312**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:26:31 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

Please support SB 312, 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. Recently, the University of Hawai‘i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project commissioned the RAND Corporation to conduct a [study](#) on the current landscape of ECE workforce wages, benefits, working conditions, recruitment and turnover issues in the state of Hawai‘i. The report 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. In the RAND report, one survey respondent mentioned, “I have to hold a second job to make [ends] meet after working for over 19 years in the same preschool. [It’s] sad, really.” This should not be the case.**

I was a preschool teacher myself 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

Elaine Yamashita  
105 Kamehameiki Rd.  
Kula, HI 96790-8451  
808-281-1216  
[elainey208@gmail.com](mailto:elainey208@gmail.com)

February 13, 2023

Aloha to Chair Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Aquino and committee members:

I am in support of SB 312. I'm an advocate for early care and education, longtime Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children (HiAEYC, an affiliate of NAEYC) member, and professor emerita of UH Maui College.

I have been in the early childhood profession for over 40 years. Infant/toddler care has been a great need all the way through. Programs are struggling to stabilize staffing. Working with infants and toddlers, understanding and providing for their development and needs, communicating with families, and providing a loving, caring environment takes a great deal of work. There is also constant new information on child development, and early childhood educators are committed to providing the best they can for the keiki and their 'ohana.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill.

Mahalo,  
*Elaine Yamashita*