



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

January 30, 2024

TO: Representative Lisa Marten, 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. 2591 – RELATING TO CHILD CARE
Hearing Date: Thursday, February 1, 2024
Time: 9:00 am
Location: Conference Room 329

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support Intent with Comments

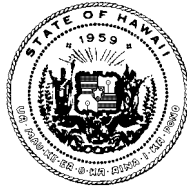
The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) supports the intent of H.B. No. 2591 and offers comments.

EOEL is committed to increasing access to affordable and high-quality early learning opportunities. Child care subsidies and tuition assistance programs, such as Preschool Open Doors (POD), help eligible families to afford child care and preschool tuition rates, alleviating the financial burden many families face when attempting to access early learning opportunities.

We are thankful to the Legislature for the significant investments made to the POD program through an appropriation of an additional \$38 million for the Executive Biennium Budget 2023-2025, made in the last legislative session. This appropriation, pursuant to Act 164, SLH 2023, provides nearly \$50 million dollars allocated to the Preschool Open Doors program, which will now serve 3- and 4-year-old children.

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 provide testimony on this measure.

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
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TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

January 30, 2024

To: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2591 – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 1, 2024, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol & Video Conference

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

PURPOSE: This bill appropriates moneys to the Department of Human Services for the Preschool Open Doors program. Declares that the appropriation exceeds the general fund expenditure ceiling.

Investing in early learning provides children the opportunity to be successful in school and gain that structured preschool experience so that they are better prepared for kindergarten. Notably, Act 164, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2023, (the executive budget bill) appropriated an additional recurring amount of \$38,800,000 to Program ID HMS 305 to fund subsidies for eligible families for preschool tuition through the Preschool Open Doors Program. This additional funding is already a part of the department's base budget; therefore, the department believes the current appropriation is sufficient at this time.

Further, Act 171, SLH 2023, expanded the Preschool Open Doors Program to include eligible three-year-old children.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

To: House Committee on Human Services

Re: HB 2591 – in strong support

Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 329

February 1, 2024; 9:00AM

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Amato 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 House Bill 2591 relating to Human Services.**

Exceeding the general fund expenditure ceiling to support Hawai'i's families in covering preschool tuition through the Preschool Open Doors Program is a critical investment in early childhood education, acknowledging the financial challenges many of our families face. By providing subsidies, the bill not only promotes accessibility to quality preschool education, but also ensures that every child, regardless of economic circumstances, has the opportunity to benefit from early childhood education, and school readiness.

This allocation of funds aligns with the commitment of HCAN Speaks! to promote and foster equitable education access and creating a foundation for the lifelong success of our community's youngest learners.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important issue. **Please pass HB 2591.**

Mahalo,

Deborah Zysman, MPH

Executive Director