

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 29, 2023

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [HB 547 HD1 SD1](#) – RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE

Hearing: March 31, 2023, 9:45 a.m.  
Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of the bill and provides comments. DHS requests that any funds appropriated for this measure not act to reduce or replace budget priorities identified in the executive budget bill HB 300 and GM1 and GM2.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to establish and implement a two-year infant and toddler child care worker subsidy pilot program to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care center settings. Appropriates funds for the pilot program. Requires reports to the Legislature. Sunsets 7/1/2025. Effective 12/31/2023. (SD1)

The HD1 amended this measure by:

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

The SD1 amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting an effective date of December 31, 2023; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

Regarding Section 2, Page 5, subsection (g), due to the department's limited capacity and estimated five hundred fifty (550) infant and toddler workers in sixty-seven (67) licensed infant and toddler centers statewide, DHS does not have the resources to enter into a contract with each eligible infant and toddler child care worker for the proposed two-year pilot period. Instead, DHS proposes that licensed infant and toddler child care centers would apply on behalf of their child care workers and provide proof that the child care worker meets the criteria in Section 2, Page 3, subsection (e) and be responsible for disbursing the subsidized participant's wages and ensuring that participants are paid wages of at least \$16.00 per hour.

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

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

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

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

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Robert G. Peters, Chair  
Early Learning Board

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

Hearing Date: Monday, March 31, 2023

Time: 9:45 am

Location: Conference Room 211

**EARLY LEARNING BOARD POSITION:** Supports the Intent

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

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

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

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

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



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

March 30, 2023

**TO:** Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

**SUBJECT: Measure:** H.B. No. 547 H.D. 1 S.D. 1 – RELATING TO CHILD CARE  
**Hearing Date:** Friday, March 31, 2023  
**Time:** 9:45 am  
**Location:** Conference Room 211

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

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

**Jennifer Kagiwada**  
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272  
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

**LATE**

**HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2**

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: March 30, 2023  
TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member  
Council District 2  
SUBJECT: HB 547

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

I am writing to you in strong support of HB 547. This bill establishes and implements a 2-year child care worker subsidy pilot program to assist in retaining our childcare workforce. This program is crucial to help support those caring for our youngest keiki and early childhood educators. Preschools, child care providers, and families are already carrying a huge responsibility and financial burden and need this additional help. Please support this program as a first step towards improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for our communities.

Mahalo,

Jenn Kagiwada



To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hearing Date/Time: Friday, March 31, 2023 9:45AM

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 547 HD1 SD1

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and the Members of Committees,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 547 HD1 SD1 which would appropriate funds to require the Department of Human Services to establish and administer a two-year Infant and Toddler Child Care Worker Subsidy Pilot Program and appropriate funds.

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

Please pass this measure and mahalo for your consideration.

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

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



**BUILDBETTER.LIVEBETTER®**

March 29, 2023

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
**Bill Number:** HB 547 HD1, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care  
**Hearing Date and Time:** March 31, 2023 at 9:45am  
**Re:** Testimony of HPM Building Supply in Support

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

I would like to submit this letter and written testimony in support of HB 547 HD1, SD1 Relating to Early Child Care. The purpose of HB 547 HD1, SD1 requires the department of human services to establish and implement a two-year infant and toddler childcare worker subsidy pilot program to assist in retaining the existing childcare workforce and appropriates funds for the pilot program.

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 547 HD1, SD1. 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 Presented to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
March 31, 2023, 9:45 a.m. (Room 211)**

**HB 547 HD1, SD1, RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE**

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Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

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

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

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

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

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brandon H. Kurisu".

Brandon Kurisu  
aio Family of Companies





**Parents And  
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS  
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 547 HD1 SD1**

**TO:** Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, & Members  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
**FROM:** Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO  
**DATE:** March 31, 2023 at 9:45 AM

**Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 547 HD1 SD1 Relating to Early Child Care**, which will support the creation of a child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step in improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

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

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

Founded in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

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



# holomua

COLLABORATIVE

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## OUR MISSION

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

## OUR VISION

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

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## BOARD MEMBERS

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

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Josh Feldman  
Brittany Heyd  
Alicia Moy  
Ed Schultz

Josh Wisch  
*President & Executive Director*

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

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

HolomuaCollaborative.org

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Page 1 of 2

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
**Bill Number:** HB 547, HD1, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care  
**Hearing Date and Time:** March 31, 2023 at 9:45am (Room 211)  
**Re:** Testimony of Holomua Collaborative in support

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee members:

We write in support of HB 547, HD1, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care. The purpose of this bill is to have the Department of Human Services establish and implement a two-year infant and toddler child care worker subsidy pilot program to retain the existing early child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler center settings 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, HD1, SD1 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 establishing and implementing the program), and the private sector in the form of the child care providers themselves, who are currently faced with not having enough professional employees because they lack the funding to pay them.

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,



Josh Wisch  
President & Executive Director

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



TITLE GUARANTY  
HAWAII

March 29, 2023

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
**Bill Number:** HB 547, HD1, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care  
**Hearing Date & Time:** March 31, 2023 at 9:45am (Room 211)  
**Re:** Testimony of Title Guaranty of Hawai'i in support

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

We write in support of HB 547, HD1, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care. This bill requires the Department of Human Services to pilot a program to provide wage supplements or subsidies for early childhood care and education professionals, starting first with those professionals who specialize in infant and toddler care.

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

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

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

Sincerely,

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



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





*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 Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: HB547 HD1 SD1, relating to early child care  
9:45 a.m., Mar. 31, 2023

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran 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 HD1 SD1, relating to early child care.**

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

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

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

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

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

*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.*

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

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

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

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

**Please support HB547 HD1 SD1.**

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

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 9:55:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ed Schultz	Testifying for Hawaiian Host Group	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran 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.

Aloha

Ed Schultz



Date: March 30, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for **HB547 HD1 SD1**, Relating to Early Child Care

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Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

**ECAS strongly supports passage of HB547 HD1 SD1**, 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, in particular, 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. Financial relief strategies such as that proposed by this bill have been implemented by 37 different states, resulting in significant improvements in teacher/caregiver retention and reductions in turnover rates by half or more.

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. Towards this end, we strongly urge you to support **HB547 HD1 SD1**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Testimony to  
The Committee on Ways and Means**

**Friday, March 31, 2023  
9:45 AM  
Conference Room 211 & VIA Videoconference  
Hawaii State Capitol**

**HB 547 HD1 SD1**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee members:

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

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

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

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

Hawai'i is in a good position to eliminate that risk and provide more security to local families by passing the state child tax credit, and we urge the committee to pass HB 547 HD1 SD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAI'I COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

To: SENATE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE  
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair  
And Members of the Committee

From: Micah Kāne, Chief Executive Officer & President - Hawai'i Community Foundation

Re: Testimony in Support of HB547 Relating to Early Child Care  
Friday, March 31, 2023, 9:45 A.M.

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) **strongly supports House Bill 547** (HB547). HB547 is an important part of supporting local families by supporting much needed child care options. This is a key area within HCF's CHANGE Framework under the "C" sector of Community & Economy. Today's cost of living creates hardships on families with children (the demand) and those that provide child care (the supply). HB547 seeks to supplement the supply of childcare, allowing parents who must work for their families to survive and thrive the ability to find childcare options. We will continue to support ideas and efforts that can bring systemic change to Hawaii for the betterment of our future. HB547 provides a solid investment of government resource, support, and confidence into this area.

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



HAWAI'I STATE  
**COALITION AGAINST  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

March 31, 2023

Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz

Vice Chair Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran

Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino

Sen. Lynn DeCoite

Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye

Sen. Dru Mamo Kanuha

Sen. Michelle N. Kidani

Sen. Donna Mercado Kim

Sen. Chris Lee

Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki

Sen. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro

Sen. Glenn Wakai

Sen. Kurt Fevella

Re: HB547 HD1 SD1

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

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

On behalf of HSCADV and our 28 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of HB547 HD1 SD1**. 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.

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. We support this measure as the first step toward supporting early childhood care and education professionals.

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

Sincerely,

Angelina Mercado, Executive Director



**LATE**

**TORI RICHARD®**  
HONOLULU

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
**Bill Number:** HB 547, HD 1, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care  
**Hearing Date:** March 31, 2023 at 9:45am (Room 211)  
**Re:** Testimony of Tori Richard, Ltd. in Support

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee members:

As a Hawaii employer in business for nearly 7 decades with over 200 employees, 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 to retain and attract these workers. Please support the creation of a childcare worker subsidy pilot program as the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

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

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

Please support this measure.

Sincerely,

Josh Feldman  
President & CEO  
Tori Richard, Ltd.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 11:44:39 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cards Pintor

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 12:07:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rainbow Family 808 supports HB547. Please pass this bill.

Mike Golojuch, Sr., Secretary/Board Member

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 1:03:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

There is a need for infant/toddler care, especially on Kauai.

Please support this bill, it will help families get back to work and most importantly retain the existing workforce in childcare.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 3:50:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<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.

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

Thanks,

RS

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 4:30:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

i SUPPORT THIS BILL

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 4:33:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii supports HB547 HD1 SD1

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 4:34:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a working mom of three, and as someone who has formerly worked in childcare, I support this bill. Quality childcare supports the function of our economy by ensuring that parents - particularly moms - can go to work and we cannot retain workers at the current wage levels.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 4:39:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I totally support this is needed!

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 4:43:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support bill HB547 HD1 SD1.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 4:53:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am in full support HB547 HD1 SD1

**HB547 HD1 SD1** demands better wages for early childhood educators through a pilot project. It starts with those caring for our youngest keiki.

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

To: Hawaii State House Committee on Ways and Means

Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, March 31, 2023, 9:45am

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 211 & Videoconference

Re: Judith Ann Armstrong is in strong support of HB547 HD1, SD1 to Increase Child Care Wages.

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

I, Judith Ann Armstrong, am in strong support of HB547 HD1, SD1 Relating to Early Child Care.

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

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

Sincerely,

Judith Ann Armstrong

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 5:07:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ashley de Coligny	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am a Kaneohe resident and mother of two writing in support of this bill. Please support a childcare worker subsidy pilot program as a first step toward improving wages for early childhood care professionals. They are so important to our working families and communities, yet so undervalued. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 5:50:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support HB547 HD1 SD1. Please support this bill.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 6:10:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

I strongly support HB 547, HD1, SD 1, which would establish and implement a two-year Infant and Toddler Child Care Pilot Program to help retain existing early child care workforce in licensed settings.

These workers are undervalued given the gravity of their work, which provides needed care services to our state's young residents. Infant and toddler care also allows working mothers to remain in the workforce to better meet the increased economic needs of their households.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 6:11:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support bill HB547. The preschool teachers in Hawaii have been underpaid for many years and are critical to women returning to the workplace after giving birth. Please support a child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 6:12:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill to strengthen the support networks for Hawai'i's families.

Respectfully,

David Ball, Honolulu

Mar. 29, 2023

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Subject: **Measure** – HB547 HD1 SD1 RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE  
**Hearing Date** – Mar. 31, 2023  
**Time** - 9:45 AM  
**Location** - Room 211

**This testimony is in strong support of HB547 HD1 SD1.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB547 HD1 SD1.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 6:18:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

*Please create a child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for Hawai'i's working families and the community. Please support HB547 HD1 SD1.*

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 6:25:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Samuel M Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

[HB547 HD1 SD1](#) demands better wages for early childhood educators through a pilot project. It starts with those caring for our youngest keiki.

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

Thank You

Samuel Mitchell Makiki NB-10 & NARFE Hawaii

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 6:56:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

As an actively voting resident of Hawai'i and a member of the Salt Lake community, I support HB547 HD1 SD1.

Mahalo,

Marissa Elizabeth Ku'uipo Baptista

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 6:59:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Early childhood educators are doing the hard work for our families and future of our keiki. Please consider increasing their wages and allowing us the funds to support the tireless work they do day in and day out. Your future depends

on the quality of care these little ones receive now.  
Thank you for your support.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 7:13:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Better wages for early childhood educators must be supported.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 7:14:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

Please create a child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for Hawai'i's working families and the community. Please support HB547 HD1 SD1.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 7:23:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support this bill that offers a child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for our community.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 8:05:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I SUPPORT this bill. Children are our future. Supporting child care workers and providing a living wage will benefit each and every citizen of Hawaii.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 8:14:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<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 this legislation. I've cared for my grandson from his birth 2 years ago and it's a big challenge to find quality childcare that my kids can afford. Being almost 70, it would be so helpful to have childcare available that's affordable for my kids and age appropriate early education for my grandson. Please help make it easier to parents and child care providers to afford to care for our keiki. That includes a liveable wage for childcare providers. It's a difficult issue and really needs to be addressed for the health and well-being of our families and communities. There are many kupuna like me, caring for their grandkids which has many benefits however it's also a lot of work for us elders.

Mahalo,

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 8:42:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I SUPPORT [HB547 HD1 SD1](#) as it demands better wages for early childhood educators through a pilot project. It starts with those caring for our youngest keiki.

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

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 8:49:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am a parent of a four year old child that needs special attention due to developmental delay. Our current system comoekrey fails to empower children and families like my own when children are under three and need to be cared for, screened, and referred for services. Our current structure severely undervalued the professionals employed caring for the youngest and most vulnerable in our society. Without well equipped and comeasureately compensated professionals caring for, and vetting children to the best resources available to them, we deny our children the prime opportunities for them to best support their futures. Our children and their futures depend on our responsibility to act now.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 9:17:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Strong support!

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 9:56:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I Support this Bill

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 10:01:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I write in strong support of the creation of a pilot program to raise wages for early childhood care and education professionals. Hawai'i's health depends on the health of our children and the early childhood care and education providers that nurture them.

Today I write as a resident of Hawai'i, but in my professional role as the deputy director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Evidence for Action program I have had the privilege of funding research evaluating how interventions designed to enhance early childhood education, care, and family environment impact health and developmental outcomes throughout the life course. Insights from this research are publicly available (<https://www.rwjf.org/en/insights/blog/2020/10/research-shows-the-importance-and-paradox-of-early-childhood-care-and-education.html>).

This pilot program is an important first step in providing early childhood care and education professionals with the living wages they deserve. This initiative supports the wellbeing keiki and some of our most critical service providers.

I encourage the committee members to vote in support of HB547.

Thank you

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 10:28:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha!

Children are our future. Please support paying a good wage to the child care workers who influence their early years and approve this pilot program to study how to retain and even increase this valuable group of workers.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify.

Barbara J. Service MSW

Child Welfare Supervisor (ret.)

Kupuna Advocate

## **TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Date: March 31, 2023

Time: 9:45 a.m.

Location: State Capitol Senate Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

### **TITLE OF BILL: HB 547 HD1 SD1 RELATING TO EARLY CHILDCARE**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members Aquino, DeCoite, Inouye, Kanuha, Kidani, Kim, Lee, Moriwaki, Shimabukuro, Wakai, and Favella,

I am submitting testimony in strong **SUPPORT** of **HB 547 HD1 SD1**.

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

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. According to a study ([summary report](#)) conducted by the Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity (ECE3) Project at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, median hourly wages, estimated at approximately \$13–\$17 per hour, are well below the living wage estimate of at least \$28.50 per hour for the state. Although median wages for child care workers in Hawaii exceed the national median, the pattern is reversed once the high cost of living in the state is accounted for.

Early educators are engaged in incredibly difficult and complex work that has been recognized as essential to children's learning and development, supportive for families, and foundational to the economy ([Early Childhood Workforce Index 2020](#)). Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. We cannot carry more without your support.

Please support the creation of a child care worker subsidy pilot program. It is the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for Hawai'i's young children and families.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of this measure.

Dena Akiu

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 3:54:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support HB547. 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. Our education professionals 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 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. If we don't, we may lose them to a more lucrative position elsewhere.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 4:25:13 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill.

Thank you

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 5:15:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 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 Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Aragan 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 at the heart of those classrooms. Please support creating a childcare worker subsidy pilot program to improve 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 Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project showed that childcare providers make between \$13 and \$17 per hour on average. National trends suggest that the younger the child you care for and educate, the lower your pay will likely 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 childcare providers also helps families access quality care when babies need it most.

Please support this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Erica Yamauchi, Kaimukī/Wilhelmina Rise

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 5:21:25 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Tsuchiya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Co Chair Keith and all honored committe members,

Thnk you for allowing this hearing. I would like to please give my

**Stong Support of HB 547 HD1 SD1,**

I am a mother of five and previous preschool teacher and family child care giver. Early Childhood Education is my passion and my love. However, I am no longer able to remain in the field due to the low wages. Many of my colleagues have also left the field due to an inability to make a living wage through the profession.

I have a masters in education and it is still unlikely that I will make more than \$20/ per hour as a full time preschool teacher. Obviously, this is far below a living wage in Hawai'i. I also have a two year old son who is on a two year waiting list for a quality school. Twenty percent of our workforce has left the field in the last two years. There is shortage of spaces due to of severe shortage in workforce.

I please implore you to VOTE IN FAVOR OF HB547 to stem the mass exodues of early childcare workers. Passing this bill will allow for a stabilization of the workforce particular to the barren landscap of Infant/ Toddler caregivers. Infant / toddler proffessionals make the least in the field although the demand is the greatest.

Many of our young families are leaving the state because it is appearing near impossible to be a young family with chldren in Hawai'i. Please pass this bill so that we can support our young fanilies and the educators that serve them.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony

**IN SUPPORT OF HB 547 HD1 SD1**

Blessings,

Malia Tsuchiya

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 6:12:59 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill!

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 6:21:39 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support this bill! Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. As an ECE professional, I know first hand the struggle of living paycheck to paycheck and having multiple jobs just to pay my bills. As a former toddler teacher, I can attest to the level of highly skilled work taking care of and educating young children at a quality level really is. The people doing this work deserve to be compensated with a living wage. 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.

Thank you,

Gemma Medina. M.Ed

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 6:47:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Solana-Ann Adachi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a former early childhood educator, I support this bill. I support an increase in wages for everyone who is dedicated in providing a safe, healthy, learning environment in the early childhood classroom.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 6:56:58 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chris Barzman	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 a child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for me, my family, and my community.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 7:14:51 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 7:35:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha kakou,

My name is Kathleen Lee and for the past 10 years, I have been blessed to work as part of a teaching team with the Partners in Development Foundation’s Tūtū and Me Traveling Preschool on the island of Molokai.

It is my understanding and experience that early educators throughout the nation, but here in Hawaii, where the cost of living is much higher than that of the other states, educators continue to struggle to maintain their family’s well-being while balancing work and home.

HB547 HD1 SD1 not just asks but demands better wages for early childhood educators through a pilot project that is critical to the success of our youngest keiki.

The support of this bill will provide evidence that early educators are valued and supported. This bill will also provide the pilot program to be a step in the right direction of improving wages for early childhood professionals that do so much for all the families they work with.

Mahalo nui for your time and I humbly ask you to please consider passing HB547 HD1 SD1.

Kathleen K. Lee

Early Childhood Educator, Parent, Community Member

Molokai, Hawaii

March 31, 2023

To: Chair Dela Cruz  
Vice Chair Keith-Agaran  
Committee Members Aquino, DeCoite, Inouye, Kanuha, Kidani, Kim, Lee, Moriwaki,  
Shimabukuro, Wakai, and Favella

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

Subject: Measure: HB 547 Relating to Early Childcare  
Hearing Date: March 31, 2023  
Time: 9:45 a.m.  
Location: State Capitol Senate Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

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

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

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

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

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

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

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 7:45:16 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I fully SUPPORT this bill.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 7:53:57 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I SUPPORT THIS BILL!!

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 7:55:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support increasing wages for Early Childhood Workers. I have worked in the ECE field for 23 years and have continuously struggled financially to continue this work. I have watched so many high quality colleagues leave the field because they simply can't afford to work in this profession. I have been working understaffed in my position for nearly a year as nobody wants to work for the pay that we offer. We provide free ECE for Maui Families as a non profit and have helped thousands of families here. ECE licensing continues to extend education requirements in hopes to eventually increase our wages and gain respect, but it still has not happened. It is time for the tax dollars we all pay to help support ECE as it is vital to keiki developing a lifelong love of learning. Families have shouldered the burden of paying the high cost of ECE for far too long and programs like ours have struggled to provide what is needed to function as a full staff because of low wages for our employees. When a job at McDonalds pays more than what can be offered to a person that shapes and molds future citizens something is severely wrong with our priorities. A keiki's brain does 80% of it's growth in the first five years it's time to invest in the work and workers that promote the fostering of this growth. It is also the time when keiki learn what is right and wrong and develop their moral values. Please make this a priority for all of our keiki and families and a reality for myself and my colleagues to earn the wages we deserve.

Sincerely

Jason Hartwick

Tutu and Me Traveling Preschool

Partners in Development Foundation.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 7:58:38 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 7:59:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 8:08:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 8:18:21 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a parent of a preschooler, I support this bill. I sent in a testimony at the previous hearing in the middle of March and want to submit again sharing that I hope the Senate Ways and Means committee will pass this bill.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 8:32:18 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Delacruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

One of my primary convictions in life is that the nurture and safety of toddlers and preschool children needs to be uppermost in our planning and implementation. When this kuleana is neglected and undervalued, families and society begin to deteriorate.

Please support HB547, **establishing** and **funding** a 2-year Pilot Program to subsidize the work of early childhood care and education. We need to retain and train this corps of valuable service providers!

Mahalo nui loa!

Cheryl Ogawa Ho, Nu‘uanu

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 8:36:45 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shay Chan Hodges	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 a child care worker subsidy pilot program as a first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for me, my family, and my community.

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 8:39:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a mom of three boys, I know the struggle of finding quality care here in Hawaii. Educators of our youngest children need to earn higher wages in order to keep them in this profession. Birth-5 is the most important years in a child's life and our children deserve high quality care from individuals that are knowledgeable about children's development. I support this bill which will help raise wages. Mahalo for your time.

**TO: WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEES**

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

**POSITION: IN SUPPORT**

Draft Testimony

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith Agaran, and committee members,

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

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

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

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

Thank you,

Moevanu Jameson  
moevanu@yahoo.com

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 8:56:17 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Pua Auyong-White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Committee Chair and Vice Chair:

I strongly support HB547 - providing a qualitative and better pay for our childcare workers is critical. We must invest in the people who care and teach our keiki. The children are our future and we need to assure that they can thrive in Hawaii and beyond. This is a no brainer.

Please support this critical and important legislation.

Pua Auyong

3432 Kalihi Street

Honolulu, HI 96819

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 8:56:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and committee members,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please support this measure.

Mahalo,

Raya Esteban

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 9:17:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair,

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 Hawai‘i 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-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 9:41:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

There is a huge pile of data regarding the importance of early childhood education. It has been shown, time and again, to improve brain development in keiki 0-5, setting them up for lifelong success. This bill would help to ensure that trained professionals are paid fairly to help recruit, prevent turnover or lapses in coverage for such a vital role in our society and community. Please pass this bill! Investing in our keiki is investing in our future!

Mahalo,

Ikaika Olds

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

March 30, 2023

Aloha to Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran and committee members:

I am in support of HB 547 HD1 SD1. 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, knowledge, and skill. 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.

This would hopefully be the beginning of an effort that will include all early childhood educators. Our keiki and their 'ohana need these important professionals and to keep them, they need a living wage.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill.

Mahalo,  
Elaine Yamashita

**LATE**

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 9:51:37 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shelly Tokunaga May	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I am in support of HB 547 to raise the wages for early childhood professionals. Our young children deserve the best quality care and teachers.

Mahalo,

Shelly Tokunaga-May

**LATE**

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 10:24:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill.

**LATE**

**HB-547-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 11:56:56 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Josie Howard	Testifying for We Are Oceania (WAO)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill. I work with alot of young women who have youngs ones. One of their ask is for our organization to start a takecare center for their keikis so that they can finish their schools and secure careers.

A reason why young mothers are asking for a child care center is so that while they are at school or work, their keiki's can learn to socialize and build relationships with others to enhance their growth development.

If our system is directing individuals to become self-sufficient while promoting nuclear families unit, we must a also provide that support, which is needed for that life style.