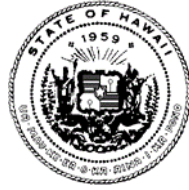


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
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

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 16, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senate Committee on Higher Education

The Honorable Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 549 HD3 – RELATING TO AN EARLY LEARNING APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM.**

Hearing: March 17, 2025, 3:01 p.m.
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure and defers to the University of Hawaii. DHS supports the apprenticeship program, which aims to increase the number of qualified early learning professionals and add to the existing child care capacity. An apprenticeship program provides opportunities to support the recruitment, retention, and professional development of early learning professionals in a career field that has been experiencing a continuous shortage of qualified caregivers and staff for early learning programs.

DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace a priority identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this measure is to establish an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program to be administered by the University of Hawai'i to provide financial support for early learning program service providers in the State to participate in state- or federally-

approved early learning apprenticeship programs. Requires an annual report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD3)

The Committee on Human Services and Homelessness (HD2) amended this measure by making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The House Committee on Higher Education (HD1) amended the measure by:

- (1) Amending the preamble to declare that the establishment of an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program is a matter of statewide concern;
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Committee on Finance further amended the measure by,

“clarifying that the financial assistance provided to eligible early learning program service providers will be limited to covering costs associated with personnel expenses and wages, training expenses, mentorship stipends, administrative costs, and certain compensation enhancements.”

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 549 HD3
RELATING TO AN EARLY LEARNING APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM

Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 17, 2025

3:01 pm

Conference Room 229

Aloha Chairs Kim and Kidani and Members of the Committee on Education and Higher Education,

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony in SUPPORT of HB 549 HD3, which proposes establishing an early learning apprenticeship grant program. This bill is a critical and timely initiative that addresses the shortage of qualified early learning professionals in Hawai'i, and its benefits will be especially impactful for Native Hawaiian children and families.

We acknowledge the recent amendments made in HB 549 HD3, particularly the declaration of the program as a matter of statewide concern. This amendment strengthens the bill's intent and underscores the importance of investing in early childhood education for the benefit of all children across Hawai'i. It is a clear recognition that early learning programs are integral to the long-term success of our keiki, and that supporting this workforce is crucial for the entire state's well-being.

As we know, early childhood education is crucial for the long-term academic and life success of our keiki. During the early years of life, a child's brain development is most rapid, and the experiences and education they receive during this time can shape their future. Quality early learning programs provide a foundation for later success, and by supporting these programs, HB 549 HD3 makes a transformative investment in Hawai'i's future.

The bill also directly addresses the shortage of qualified early learning professionals, a challenge that significantly limits access to quality early education, especially in underserved areas. The proposed apprenticeship model is a proven pathway to equip educators with both practical experience and academic knowledge, ensuring they are well-prepared to meet the diverse needs of our keiki.

Furthermore, HB 549 HD3 recognizes the importance of providing fair and competitive wages for early learning professionals. In Native Hawaiian communities, where economic disparities have historically created barriers to success, offering fair compensation is essential to attracting and retaining high-quality educators. By aligning salaries with industry standards, this bill ensures that early learning professionals are not only well-prepared but also fairly compensated for their important work.

This bill directly aligns with OHA's Mana i Maui Ola Strategic Educational Pathways, which focuses on culturally grounded and equitable learning opportunities for Native Hawaiian children. By supporting the training, recruitment, and retention of skilled early learning professionals, we contribute to the success of Native Hawaiian students and ensure that they receive a culturally relevant education that will empower them to thrive academically, socially, and culturally.

We strongly urge the Committee to **pass** HB 549 HD3, this important bill, and look forward to its positive impact on our keiki and communities. Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.



STATE OF HAWAII

Executive Office on Early Learning

Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'āina
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

TO: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senate Committee on Higher Education

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senate Committee on Education

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

SUBJECT: Testimony on H.B. No. 549, H.D. 3 – RELATING TO AN EARLY LEARNING
APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM.

Committee: HRE/EDU
Date: Monday, March 17, 2025
Time: 3:01 p.m.
Location: Conference room 229

Executive Office on Early Learning Position: **SUPPORT**

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) offers the following comments in support of H.B. No. 549, H.D. 3, and defers to the University of Hawai'i regarding implementation and funding.

Early Learning Registered Apprenticeship Programs (ELRAPs) create structured pathways for aspiring early childhood professionals to gain hands-on experience, earn credentials, and achieve career advancement through apprenticeships that integrate employer-paid classroom learning with on-the-job training and comprehensive wraparound support.

This bill creates a grant program to mitigate financial barriers to participation in state-approved or federally approved ELRAPs for licensed or registered early learning program service providers, with priority given to infant and toddler programs.

EOEL is committed to improving the recruitment, retention, and career pathways for our early learning workforce, and recognizes that our capacity to expand access to early learning opportunities for Hawai'i's keiki is dependent on our ability to grow and support our workforce. ELRAPs can enhance the sustainability and capacity of the workforce by:

- Addressing workforce shortages in the early childhood field by supporting recruitment and retention;
- Providing competitive compensation and benefits to ensure employees are valued; and
- Improving opportunities for professional advancement.

EOEL would be happy to collaborate with the University of Hawai'i to develop the award criteria for this grant program, as directed in this bill.

We appreciate the Legislature's continued investment in our youngest keiki and their families. Thank you for the opportunity to share these comments in support of this bill.

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE KAIĀULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD, SUITE 200 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817
PHONE: (808) 768-7762 • FAX: (808) 768-7792 • WEBSITE: honolulu.gov/dcs

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



ANTON C. KRUCKY
DIRECTOR
PO'O

AEDWARD LOS BANOS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

March 12, 2025

The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education
State Capitol, Conference Room 229
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Education
State Capitol, Conference Room 229
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Kim and Chair Kidani
And Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education
And Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

SUBJECT: Measure H.B. No. 549 H.D. 3 – Relating to an Early Learning
Apprenticeship Grant Program

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. No. 549 H.D. 3.

Our State faces a critical shortage of affordable, high-quality child care options. Families are struggling to secure the care they need to support their children's development while maintaining economic stability. This bill offers a tangible solution to this urgent issue by:

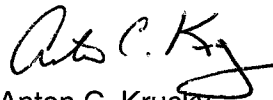
1. **Supporting the Early Learning Workforce:** The grant program will fund training and professional development opportunities for over 500 existing early learning professionals. This investment will enhance the quality of care, improve retention in a historically low-paying field, and address turnover rates by offering pathways for career advancement.
2. **Increasing the Supply of Child Care Slots:** By incentivizing individuals to enter and advance in the field, this program has the potential to create 100- 150 additional slots for infants and toddlers under the age of three, or up to 200 slots for three- and four-year-olds. These added slots will help families currently on waiting lists and those forced to make difficult compromises between work and caregiving.

The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Education
March 12, 2025
Page 2

3. **Creating Sustainable Career Pathways:** Funding apprenticeship programs will recruit new talent into the early learning profession, while offering structured pathways for career growth. This approach builds a sustainable pipeline of high-quality child care professionals, many of whom reflect the diverse communities they serve.
4. **Strengthening Economic Stability:** The child care industry generates over \$300 million in revenue for the State. In addition, access to reliable child care is critical for families in Hawai'i where the high cost of living makes workforce participation a necessity. This program helps to strengthen Hawai'i's economy by generating revenue and creating new jobs in the child care industry, while also supporting families by enabling them to participate in Hawai'i's workforce.

This legislation aligns with our shared vision of prioritizing early learning as a cornerstone of Hawai'i's future. By investing in this apprenticeship grant program, we address immediate workforce while laying the foundation for long-term, systemic improvement in field. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Sincerely,



Anton C. Krucky
Director Designate



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Education
Monday, March 17, 2025 at 3:01 p.m.

By
Nathan Murata, Dean
College of Education
And
Michael Bruno, PhD
Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 549 HD3 – RELATING TO AN EARLY LEARNING APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM

Chair Kim and Kidani and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 549 HD3, which establishes an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant program to be administered by the University of Hawai'i to provide financial support for early learning program service providers in the State to participate in state- or federally-approved early learning apprenticeship programs.

Families across our state are struggling to find affordable, high-quality early learning programs that support their young children's development while families maintain their own economic stability. At the same time, there is a desperate need to support the recruitment, retention, and stabilization of our specially trained early learning workforce.

This bill offers a tangible solution to these pressing issues by:

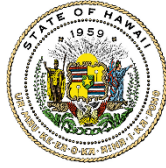
- 1. Supporting the Early Learning Professionals:** The grant program will provide funding to support over 500 existing early learning professionals, helping them access critical training and professional development opportunities. This investment will not only enhance the quality of care but also improve recruitment and retention in the early care and education field that has historically faced high turnover due to low wages and limited growth opportunities.
- 2. Increasing the Supply of Early Learning Slots:** By incentivizing individuals to enter and advance in the field, this program has the potential to add up to 75 additional slots for infants and toddlers under the age of three, and up to 200 slots for three and four-year olds. These additional slots will directly benefit families who are on

waiting lists or forced to make difficult compromises in their work and other responsibilities.

3. **Creating Career Pathways:** By funding apprenticeships, the program will offer a structured pathway for career entry and advancement, that will enhance the recruitment of new individuals into the early learning profession. This is especially important in creating good jobs for individuals who reflect the diverse communities they will serve.
4. **Strengthening Economic Stability:** For families in Hawai'i who struggle with the high cost of living, access to reliable child care is often the key to maintaining stable employment and achieving economic security. The proposed program will play a critical role in ensuring parents can participate fully in their jobs and careers, knowing their children are in safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate settings.

HB 549 HD3 will help to grow our early learning workforce and aligns with the shared vision of prioritizing early learning as a cornerstone of our state's future. By investing in the apprenticeship grant program, we are not only addressing immediate needs but also laying the groundwork for long-term systemic improvements in early learning for our young children's success in school and in life.

Mahalo for supporting HB 549 HD3.



STATE OF HAWAII
Early Learning Board
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

March 12, 2025

To: Senator Kim, Chair
Senator Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Higher Education Committee

Senator Kidani, Chair
Senator Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Education Committee

From: Elaine Yamashita, Chair
Early Learning Board

Re: HB549 HD3 support

Aloha, Honorable Chair Kim, Chair Kidani, and members of the Senate Higher Education and Education committees:

The Early Learning Board (ELB) formulates statewide policy relating to early learning, as well as directing the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL).

The Early Learning Board supports HB 549 HD3, which will expand the current early childhood registered apprenticeship program. This directly affects and supports much needed expansion of the early childhood workforce. Recruitment and retention of our important early educators is key to providing high quality care and education for our youngest keiki.

It is a specialized body of knowledge and experience based on child development and effective relationships, and apprenticeships provide both. The bill would also allow community-based providers resources to provide incentives for apprentices to continue and for the program as a whole.

Mahalo for your consideration and support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Elaine Yamashita
Early Learning Board Chair
elb@eoel.hawaii.gov

To: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committees on Higher Education and Education

From: Chevelle Davis, MPH - Director of Early Childhood & Health Policy
Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 549 H.D. 3 – Relating to an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program

Hearing: Monday, March 17, 2025, at 3:01 PM, Conference Room 229

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chair Kidani, and Members of the committees:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT of H.B. No. 549 H.D. 3**. The proposed Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program is a critical step toward stabilizing our early learning system and ensuring all keiki across Hawai'i access early learning services. Families across Hawai'i are facing a severe shortage of affordable, early learning options, making it increasingly difficult for parents/guardians to balance work and their children's early development. This bill presents a meaningful solution by:

1. **Investing in the Early Learning Workforce** – Early learning starts with well-trained and supported educators. This grant program will provide professional development and training for over 500 early learning professionals, improving the quality of care, reducing turnover, and creating pathways for career advancement in a historically underpaid field. When we invest in our educators, we invest in better outcomes for our keiki.
2. **Increasing Supply of Child Care Spaces** – By supporting workforce growth and retention, this program will help create 100-150 new slots for infants and toddlers under the age of three and up to 200 additional slots for three- and four-year-olds. These additional spaces will help alleviate long waitlists and provide much-needed relief for working families who struggle to find care.
3. **Building Sustainable Career Pathways**—This bill establishes structured apprenticeship opportunities, recruiting new professionals into the field while ensuring they receive hands-on training and mentorship. By fostering a strong, well-trained workforce that reflects the diverse communities they serve, we can create a lasting, sustainable pipeline of early childhood educators.

4. **Supporting Hawai'i's Economic Stability** – The child care sector generates over \$300 million in revenue for the state and is an essential component of our economy, enabling parents/guardians to participate in the workforce. With Hawai'i's high cost of living, reliable child care is critical for families striving to maintain financial stability. This program strengthens our economy by supporting businesses, creating jobs, and ensuring that parents/guardians have the ability to work while knowing their children are safe.

This measure aligns with our collective vision of prioritizing early learning as a foundational investment in Hawai'i's future. By supporting this apprenticeship grant program, we take a critical step in addressing our child care crisis while laying the foundation for a stronger, more resilient early learning system.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **H.B. No. 549 H.D. 3**.

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 2:08:53 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)	Testifying for Pride at Work – Hawai‘i	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice.

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i fully supports HB 549 HD 3.

We ask that you support this needed piece of legislation.

Mahalo,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)
President
[Pride at Work – Hawai‘i](#)



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 549 HD3
Relating to an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program**

TO: Chair Donna Mercado Kim & Members, Senate Committee on Higher Education
Chair Michelle Kidani & Members, Senate Committee on Education
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO
DATE: March 17, 2025 at 3:01 PM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 549 HD3, Relating to an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program, which will incentivize early learning employers in Hawaii to participate in a specialized apprenticeship program.

Child care workers face disproportionately low wages, which contributes to high turnover rates and loss of workforce. Lack of affordable and available child care has far reaching consequences, from the individual development of children to family economic stability, to employer operations. When child care is not available, parents cannot work, triggering a cascade of problems for the family and for employers.

Early learning registered apprenticeship programs (ELRAPs) are a proven recruitment and retention strategy, offering apprentices higher compensation and valuable on-the-job learning experiences as they work towards earning a higher education degree. ELRAPs have also been successful at increasing the quality of early learning programs as they develop a well-prepared, well-supported, and well-compensated ECE workforce.

Many early learning providers are unable to participate in ELRAPs because they cannot afford to pay the higher wages of apprentices and ensure wage parity for existing staff. The ELRAP grant would remove this financial barrier and allow providers to pay their existing staff higher wages, ensuring that wages are comparable to federal wage requirements or prevailing industry standards.

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 if you have any questions.



Hearing Date: **Monday, March 17, 2025, 3:01 PM, Conf. Rm 229**

To: Committee on Higher Education
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Committee on Education
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 549, HD 3 RELATING TO AN EARLY LEARNING APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi , and the Members of the Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB 549, HD 3** which establishes an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program to be administered by the University of Hawaii to provide financial support for early learning program service providers in the State to participate in state or federally approved early learning apprenticeship programs.

Hawaii has a shortage of qualified child care employees to fill these many vacant, but critical positions. Early childhood care and educational professionals are undervalued in Hawaii, averaging just \$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.

Early Learning Registered Apprenticeship Programs (ELRAP) are a proven recruitment and retention strategy, offering apprentices higher compensation and valuable on-the-job learning experiences as they work towards earning a higher education degree. AAUW of Hawaii supports this measure that will aid Hawaii in retaining and recruiting qualified child care workers, including women who want to work in the field, but cannot, or will not, due to the current low wage. An important feature in this bill will provide funding to eligible providers participate in state- or federally-approved ELRAPs to adequately compensate these workers in training as well as allow providers to pay their existing staff higher wages, ensuring that wages are comparable to federal wage requirements or prevailing industry standards.

Please pass this important measure which will support working families and child care workers by helping them stay in the work force and be productive, tax-paying members of society. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jean Evans".

Jean Evans
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 through research, education, and advocacy. Our goal is economic security for women and their families.



Date: March 15, 2025

To: COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for **HB549 HD3**, Relating to An Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program

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 HB549 HD3, which would provide financial support for early learning employers to participate in Early Learning Registered Apprenticeship Programs (ELRAPs).

High-quality early learning programs are fundamental to thriving children, flourishing families, and a robust economy. An effective, well-trained, early learning workforce is the backbone of these programs. Chronic issues related to poor compensation and limited professional advancement opportunities, however, pose huge barriers to workforce recruitment and retention.

Early Learning Registered Apprenticeship Programs offer new early learning professionals appropriately-scaled, higher compensation, and valuable on-the-job learning experiences as they work towards earning college degrees. ELRAPs have proven to be an effective recruitment and retention strategy, facilitating a pipeline of new employees into early learning programs and providing the compensation and career pathways instrumental to retaining professionals in the field.

However, many early learning providers are unable to participate in ELRAPs because they cannot afford to pay the higher wages of apprentices and ensure wage parity for existing staff, as well as support the training and mentoring activities associated with apprenticeship. By providing key grant funding, this measure would help close budget shortfalls and remove the financial barriers impeding the participation of eligible early learning providers in state- or federally-approved ELRAPs.

By building the supply of highly-skilled and well-compensated early learning professionals, expansion of ELRAP participation, via the support of grants, would ultimately increase the number and seat capacity of early learning programs, as well as enhance the quality of care provided by programs.

In order for Hawai'i to 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 **HB549 HD3**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Our Mission

Increase Hawai'i's investments in its youngest keiki by collaborating with elected officials and serving as a trusted partner and reliable resource for information on issues related to Hawai'i's youngest keiki and families.



Steering Committee

City and County of Honolulu

- Justina Acevedo-Cross
- Greg Auberry
- Chiyomi Chow
- Kanoe Enos
- JoAnn Farnsworth
- Jordana Ferreira
- Nadia Garcia
- Danny Goya
- Alex Harris
- Sakinah Harrison
- Erin Henderson
- Monique Ibarra
- Shawn Kana'iaupuni
- Ryan Kusumoto
- Ka'iulani Laehā
- Lynelle Marble
- Megan McCorriston
- Marty Oliphant
- Cherilyn Shiinoki
- Laurie Tochiki
- Sunshine Topping
- Kerrie Urosevich
- Carol Wear
- S. Kukunaokalā Yoshimoto

Maui County

- Ka'ina Bonacorsi
- Kawika Mattos
- Bobbie-Jo Moniz-Tadeo

Kaua'i County

- Sarah Blane
- Alice Luck

Hawai'i County

- Sulma Gandhi
- Kahi Moreman
- Angela Thomas



Contact Info

700 Bishop Street, Suite 1701
Honolulu, Hawai'i 93813

info@committokeiki.org
CommitToKeiki.org

Date: March 17, 2025

To: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education

Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Education

From: Commit to Keiki

RE: House Bill 549 HD3, Relating to an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program

Commit to Keiki is a statewide, non-partisan, public-private collaborative to ensure a brighter start for Hawai'i's youngest keiki. Led by a diverse Steering Committee, Commit to Keiki's mission is to increase Hawai'i's investments in its youngest keiki by collaborating with elected officials and serving as a trusted partner and reliable resource for information on issues related to early childhood.

Commit to Keiki strongly supports passage of House Bill 549 HD3, which would establish the Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program at the University of Hawai'i and provide financial support to early learning employers who participate in the program.

The importance of high-quality early learning opportunities cannot be overstated. Providing our community's youngest keiki with access to programs of this nature is critical to their overall development and has positive impacts on both the wellbeing of their families and our local economy.

It is impossible to provide these high-quality opportunities without a workforce of highly prepared educators.

For years, the field of early learning has struggled with numerous issues including low compensation and limited opportunity for professional advancement. This has propped up significant barriers for individuals who are looking to enter the workforce and resulted in a limited number of available slots at a limited number of early learning programs.

The Early Learning Apprenticeship Program would provide those studying to become early learning educators with higher compensation and applicable, on-the-job experience while they are still completing their undergraduate coursework. Similar apprenticeship programs around the country have proven to be successful in both recruitment and retention of individuals who are interested in joining the early learning workforce, and it is our position that the program laid out in this measure would enjoy similar success.

For these reasons, CTK strongly supports HB549 HD3.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



holomua

COLLABORATIVE

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.

BOARD MEMBERS

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

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Josh Feldman
Brittany Heyd
Alicia Moy
Ed Schultz

Josh Wisch
President & Executive Director

827 Fort Street Mall, 2nd Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

+1 (808) 542-4089
info@holomuacollaborative.org

HolomuaCollaborative.org

Page 1 of 2

Committee: Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Education
Bill Number: HB 549 HD3, Relating to An Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program
Hearing Date and Time: March 17, 2025, at 3:01pm (Room 229)
Re: Testimony of Holomua Collaborative in support

Aloha Chair Kim, Chair Kidani, and Committee Members:

We write in support of HB 549 HD3, Relating to An Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program. The purpose of HB 549 HD3 is to establish an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program to provide financial support for early learning program service providers in the State to participate in state- or federally-approved early learning apprenticeship programs. This Program will help with the recruitment, retention, and upskilling of our early learning workforce so parents can fully participate in the workforce.

Multiple studies have shown that a person's most dramatic brain development occurs in the first three years of their life. Making sure that frontline early learning workers—who are in charge of molding the minds of young children during these critical years—are paid well enough to stay in the profession benefits: (1) the 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.

Hawai'i is having an increasingly difficult time retaining and recruiting infant and toddler child care and early learning workers. The RAND Corporation¹ has noted that as of May 2021, the typical child care worker in Hawai'i earned just under \$13.79 on an hourly basis. When adjusting for cost of living, this is lower than the national median hourly wage for child care workers. This is unsustainable.

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 access to 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.

We know that early learning and child care program service 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, early learning professionals leave the state.

¹ 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.



The Grant Program established by HB 549 HD3 will allow early learning program service providers to cover costs associated with participation in state- or federally-approved early learning programs, including personnel expenses and wages, training expenses, mentorship stipends, administrative costs, wage supplements, wage or salary increases, and other compensation enhancements to attract and retain qualified employees.

The establishment of the Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program will help break this cycle of poor retention and recruitment, and put us on a path to greater affordability both for early learning workers and for those who need access to early learning.

We are proud to support HB 549 and urge you to pass it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Josh Wisch', is written in a cursive style.

Josh Wisch
President & Executive Director

March 17, 2025

Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Education
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair



Working together for Kapolei

Monday, March 17, 2025, 3:01 p.m.
Conference Room #229 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

RE: HB 549, HD3 Relating to an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program

Dear Chairs Kim and Kidani and members of the Committee,

My name is Kiran Polk, and I am the Executive Director & CEO of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce. The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is an advocate for businesses in the Kapolei region including Waipahu, Kapolei, 'Ewa Beach, Nānakūli, Wai'anae and Mākaha. The Chamber works on behalf of its members and the business community to improve the regional and State economic climate and help West O'ahu businesses thrive. We are a member-driven, member-supported organization representing the interests of all types of business: small, medium or large, for profit or non-profit businesses or sole proprietorship.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of **HB 549 HD2**, which establishes an **Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program** to be administered by the University of Hawai'i. This program will provide much-needed financial support for early learning service providers across the state, allowing them to participate in state- or federally-approved early learning apprenticeship programs.

Families across Hawai'i are struggling to find **affordable, high-quality early learning programs** that support their children's development while allowing parents to maintain economic stability. At the same time, there is an urgent need to **strengthen and grow the early learning workforce**, which continues to face significant recruitment and retention challenges.

HB 549 HD2 provides a direct, meaningful solution to these pressing issues by:

1. Supporting the Early Learning Workforce

The grant program will provide funding to support **over 500 existing early learning professionals**, ensuring they have access to critical training and professional development opportunities. This investment will enhance the quality of care and improve recruitment and retention in a field that has long been plagued by **high turnover due to low wages and limited career advancement opportunities**.

2. Expanding Early Learning Opportunities

By incentivizing individuals to **enter and advance in the early learning field**, this program has the potential to **increase available childcare slots**, including:

- **Up to 75 additional slots for infants and toddlers under age three**
- **Up to 200 additional slots for three- and four-year-olds**

This expansion is crucial for families who are currently on waitlists or struggling to find care that meets their needs.

3. Creating Stronger Career Pathways

By funding apprenticeships, **HB 549 HD2** will **establish structured career pathways** that attract and retain individuals in the early learning profession. This is especially important for residents looking for **stable, well-supported career opportunities** with long-term growth potential.

4. Strengthening Economic Stability for Families and Businesses

For many families, access to reliable early learning programs is essential for parents to **remain in the workforce** and contribute to the local economy. This bill supports employers, businesses, and overall economic stability by ensuring parents have access to safe, high-quality childcare options.

Investing in the Future of Hawai'i's Workforce and West O'ahu's Growth

Prioritizing early learning is especially important to West O'ahu as our population grows in *the fastest growing region in the state*. With a population of almost 200,000 (including the Wai'anae Coast, 'Ewa, and Waipahu). In Kapolei and 'Ewa alone households are expected to exceed 56,000 by the year 2035 and over the next 30 years the population in Kapolei and 'Ewa will increase by 40 percent and housing by 52 percent. **More Early Learning facilities are needed to meet the needs of families in West O'ahu, and with these new facilities, our early learning workforce will need to expand and grow.**

Kapolei Chamber of Commerce has established itself as a *Career Hub* that generates, supports, connects, documents and reports the programmatic efforts to assist schools in delivering world-class programs that improve student achievement, increase post-secondary attendance, and generate a vibrant workforce. The Kapolei Chamber does this in partnership with the University of Hawai'i at West O'ahu, the Hawai'i State Dept. of Education and our private and charter schools in West O'ahu. In 2018, the Chamber pioneered student career exploration in the State by holding the 1st multi-school student career expo. We now bring almost 2,000 9th grade students from West O'ahu high schools onto the campus at UH West O'ahu to interact and explore careers by interacting with over 60 businesses and organizations as they select their career academies.

Career exploration is only the launching point and work-based learning is the continuum needed to strengthen our pipeline from K-12 to post-secondary and into our workforce. The Kapolei Chamber is also dedicated to working with our education partners in West O'ahu to **address curricular and outreach gaps in the workforce pipeline by advocating and supporting internship and mentoring opportunities for our students with West O'ahu employers** among industry sectors including education, healthcare, innovative technology and the professional trades. Investing in our future workforce is a priority for the Kapolei Chamber to keep pace with the growth in our region. Providing a work-based learning experience has proven to strengthen our talent pipeline.

By **investing in workforce development through the apprenticeship grant program**, we are **not only addressing the immediate childcare crisis but also laying the foundation for long-term improvements** in early care and education—ensuring young children have the support they need to succeed in school and life.

We respectfully urge your support for **HB 549 HD2** and its passage to strengthen our early learning workforce, expand childcare opportunities, and support economic growth in our communities.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Best,

Kiran Polk
Executive Director & CEO

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 3:50:12 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander K.D. McNicoll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in **strong support** of HB549,

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:01:30 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support HB549. Please pass this bill.

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:45:14 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB549 HD3. Please support HB549 HD3.

March 12, 2025

To: The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
The Honorable Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
and members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education

The Honorable Michelle Kidani, Chair
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
and members of the Senate Committee on Education

Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Measure H.B. 549 HD 3 – Relating to the Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H. B. No. 549 HD 3.

Aloha,

My name is Dr. Terry Lock. Currently, I am the Director of the Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity (ECE³) Project at the University of Hawai'i Mānoa College of Education. I have been in the field of early childhood education for the past 49 years.

In Hawai'i, many parents, like my own adult children, with young children, continue to struggle to find high-quality reliable early learning programs that support their young children's development and simultaneously help them to work and achieve economic security. Unfortunately, many early learning programs are having difficulty recruiting and retaining quality early learning professionals.

This proposed Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program offers a tangible solution to these pressing issues. If this program is fully funded it will be:

1. **Supporting the Early Learning Professionals:** The grant program will provide funding to support over 500 existing early learning professionals, helping them access critical training and professional development opportunities. This investment will not only enhance the quality of care but also improve recruitment and retention in the early care and education field that has historically faced high turnover due to low wages and limited growth opportunities.
2. **Increasing the Supply of Early Learning Slots:** By incentivizing individuals to enter and advance in the field, this program has the potential to add up to 75 additional slots for infants and toddlers under the age of three, and up to 200 slots for three and four year olds. These additional slots will directly benefit families who are on waiting lists or forced to make difficult compromises in their work and other responsibilities.
3. **Creating Career Pathways:** By funding apprenticeships, the program will offer a structured pathway for career entry and advancement, that will

enhance the recruitment of new individuals into the early learning profession. This is especially important in creating good jobs for individuals who reflect the diverse communities they will serve.

4. **Strengthening Economic Stability:** For families in Hawai'i who struggle with the high cost of living, access to reliable child care is often the key to maintaining stable employment and achieving economic security. The proposed program will play a critical role in ensuring parents can participate fully in their jobs and careers, knowing their children are in safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate settings.

As the Director of the ECE³ Project at the UHM College of Education, I supported Honolulu Community College (HonCC) and Keiki O Ka 'Āina Family Learning Centers' (KOKA) in launching our state's first early childhood education (ECE) registered apprenticeship program through KOKA in the summer of 2023. Recently, I spoke to one of KOKA's apprentices. She is employed as an aide at KOKA's Ka Pua Preschool, located in Mā'ili, 'Oahu. With strong support from her husband and their four boys, ages 14, 11, 10, and 5, she enrolled in her first ECE course at HonCC in the 2023-2024 academic year. She shared, "To be in a job, while going to school, has made a huge difference. This [apprenticeship program] fits the type of learner that I am. I love that I get to apply what I learn from my mentor and my college instructors, while interacting with preschool children." She also credits her "very encouraging" instructors at HonCC. She is on target to complete her first of three milestones, a Child Development Associate (CDA), a nationally recognized credential in May 2025. Her goal is to be a preschool lead teacher or open her own day care program.

HB 549 HD2 will help to grow our early learning workforce and aligns with the shared vision of prioritizing early learning as a cornerstone of our state's future. By investing in the apprenticeship grant program, we are not only addressing immediate needs but also laying the groundwork for long-term systemic improvements in early learning for our young children's success in school and in life.

Mahalo for supporting H. B. No. 549 HD 3.

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 7:11:42 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing HB549 which would increase and develop the number of childcare professionals through apprenticeship programs. This would help the shortage problem we have with childcare professionals. Please pass this measure.

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 2:29:48 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to the Higher Education and Education Committees!

I **strongly support HB549**, a bill that develops critical early learning workforce and supports current providers.

Our state has a high demand for more early learning workforce, but difficulty in recruitment and retention. Registered apprenticeship models have demonstrated success in both helping the current providers and training new professionals, and we need to support these programs now. Please vote yes on this important bill for our keiki.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 3:12:03 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chloe Pua'ena Vierra-Villanueva	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am testifying in strong support of HB549, which would incentivize early learning employers in Hawai'i to participate in Early Learning Registered Apprenticeship Programs (ELRAPs).

To ensure families have access to high quality early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must fairly compensate our early care and education workforce and provide them with opportunities for professional advancement. Early learning registered apprenticeship programs are a proven recruitment and retention strategy, offering apprentices higher compensation and valuable on-the-job learning experiences as they work towards earning a higher education degree. ELRAPs have also been successful at increasing the quality of early learning programs as they develop a well-prepared, well-supported, and well-compensated ECE workforce.

However, many early learning providers are unable to participate in ELRAPs because they cannot afford to pay the higher wages of apprentices and ensure wage parity for existing staff. The ELRAP grant would remove this financial barrier by providing funding for eligible providers to participate in state- or federally-approved ELRAPs. The grant would also allow providers to pay their existing staff higher wages, ensuring that wages are comparable to federal wage requirements or prevailing industry standards.

This bill would give priority to licensed and/or regulated child care providers serving infants and toddlers (I/T) due to the greater challenges families face in accessing high-quality, affordable I/T care. I/T care and education has the highest unmet need among all early learning services in Hawai'i. Starting with our I/T child care providers will help families access quality care from the time children need it most.

This grant would enable more providers to participate, benefiting Hawai'i's children, families, and early education professionals. Additionally, it would support businesses by helping employees with young children—particularly mothers—stay in the workforce, addressing the common challenge of inaccessible and unaffordable child care.

Please support this measure.

Mahalo,

C. Pua'ena Vierra-Villanueva

'Ohana Leadership Council

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 3:20:32 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ka'ale'a Kyrstin Hanawahine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to the Higher Education and Education Committees!

I **strongly support HB549**, a bill that develops critical early learning workforce and supports current providers.

Our state has a high demand for more early learning workforce, but difficulty in recruitment and retention. Registered apprenticeship models have demonstrated success in both helping the current providers and training new professionals, and we need to support these programs now. Please vote yes on this important bill for our keiki.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 4:58:44 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Senate Committees on Higher Education and Education,

I am testifying in support of HB 549 HD3, which would incentivize early learning employers in Hawai‘i to participate in Early Learning Registered Apprenticeship Programs (ELRAPs).

To ensure families have access to high-quality early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must fairly compensate our early care and education workforce and provide them with opportunities for professional advancement. Early Learning Registered Apprenticeship Programs are a proven recruitment and retention strategy, offering apprentices higher compensation and valuable on-the-job learning experiences as they work toward earning a higher education degree. ELRAPs have also been successful at increasing the quality of early learning programs as they develop a well-prepared, well-supported, and well-compensated ECE workforce.

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 childhood educator. An early care and education apprenticeship program would have been perfect for me—allowing me to earn higher wages while gaining valuable professional development without needing to leave the classroom.

However, many early learning providers are unable to participate in ELRAPs because they cannot afford to pay the higher wages of apprentices and ensure wage parity for existing staff. The ELRAP grant would remove this financial barrier by providing funding for eligible providers to participate in state- or federally-approved ELRAPs. The grant would also allow providers to pay their existing staff higher wages, ensuring that wages are comparable to federal wage requirements or prevailing industry standards.

Furthermore, this bill would give priority to licensed and/or regulated child care providers serving infants and toddlers (I/T) due to the greater challenges families face in accessing high-quality, affordable I/T care. I/T care and education has the highest unmet need among all early learning services in Hawai‘i. Starting with our I/T child care providers will help families access quality care from the time babies need it most.

Innovative recruitment and retention strategies such as apprenticeship programs are especially important because early learning programs depend on staff to maintain their operations. If more and more early childhood education professionals leave the field because of low wages, we will have no one to care for our keiki, and early learning programs may be forced to shut down. This will have devastating outcomes for children, who deserve safe, stable, and nurturing environments, particularly in the formative years of their lives.

In short, ELRAPs are a proven recruitment and retention strategy for the early care and education workforce. This grant would enable more providers to participate, benefiting Hawai'i's children, families, and early education professionals. Additionally, it would support businesses by helping employees with young children—particularly mothers—stay in the workforce, addressing the common challenge of inaccessible and unaffordable child care.

Please support this measure.

Mahalo,
Raya Esteban

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 5:22:29 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristy Arias	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I strongly urge you to support HB549! It's been proven that apprenticeship works in any career field. This bill is much needed!

We are struggling to find early childhood care employees, and to keep them in the field.

As a mom, I didn't know of the future challenges I would have with my son who is now 15. I am a volunteer for a non-profit organization that helps our early childhood employees spot out neurological disorders such as autism, adhd, tourette syndrome. This apprenticeship will learn how to build a strong foundation for their community.

Early childhood employees are so essential to our community in all aspects. Please support this bill. Let's get this moving to a better future!

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 10:46:33 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to the Higher Education and Education Committees!

I **strongly support HB549**, a bill that develops critical early learning workforce and supports current providers.

Our state has a high demand for more early learning workforce, but difficulty in recruitment and retention. Registered apprenticeship models have demonstrated success in both helping the current providers and training new professionals, and we need to support these programs now. Please vote yes on this important bill for our keiki.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 11:21:47 AM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **strongly support HB549**, a bill that develops critical early learning workforce and supports current providers.

Our state has a high demand for more early learning workforce, but difficulty in recruitment and retention. Registered apprenticeship models have demonstrated success in both helping the current providers and training new professionals, and we need to support these programs now. Please vote yes on this important bill for our keiki.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Elaine Yamashita
105 Kamehameiki Rd.
Kula, HI 96790-8451
808-281-1216
elainey208@gmail.com

March 12, 2025

To: Senator Kim, Chair
Senator Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Higher Education Committee

Senator Kidani, Chair
Senator Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Education Committee

From: Elaine Yamashita

Re: HB549 HD3 support

Aloha, Honorable Chair Kim, Chair Kidani, and members of the Senate Higher Education and Education committees:

While I serve as chair of the Early Learning Board, this is my personal testimony. I've been an advocate for early childhood care and education since the 1980s. I am professor emerita of University of Hawai'i Maui College, where I was the program coordinator from 2000-2019.

I support HB 549 HD3, which would expand the current early childhood apprenticeship program. This is a way to grow our important early childhood care and education workforce in a way that supports the specialized knowledge and relationship building that effective early educators utilize to optimize children's growth and development.

Equitable compensation to retain early educators is crucial, and apprenticeships support this.

Mahalo for your consideration and support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Elaine Yamashita
elainey208@gmail.com

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 7:53:02 AM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Higher Education and Education Committees,

I **strongly support HB549**, a bill that develops critical early learning workforce and supports current providers.

Our state has a high demand for more early learning workforce, but difficulty in recruitment and retention. Registered apprenticeship models have demonstrated success in both helping the current providers and training new professionals, and we need to support these programs now. Please vote yes on this important bill for our keiki.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your support of this important bill.

Sincerely,

Jordan

Honolulu, 96813

LATE

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 4:46:26 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to the Higher Education and Education Committees!

I **strongly support HB549**, a bill that develops critical early learning workforce and supports current providers.

Our state has a high demand for more early learning workforce, but difficulty in recruitment and retention. Registered apprenticeship models have demonstrated success in both helping the current providers and training new professionals, and we need to support these programs now. Please vote yes on this important bill for our keiki.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Beth Anderson

LATE

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 10:29:49 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexis Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to the Higher Education and Education Committees!

I **strongly support HB549**, a bill that develops critical early learning workforce and supports current providers.

Our state has a high demand for more early learning workforce, but difficulty in recruitment and retention. Registered apprenticeship models have demonstrated success in both helping the current providers and training new professionals, and we need to support these programs now. Please vote yes on this important bill for our keiki.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

LATE

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 2:12:31 AM

Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha to the Higher Education and Education Committees!

I **strongly support HB549**, a bill that develops critical early learning workforce and supports current providers.

Our state has a high demand for more early learning workforce, but difficulty in recruitment and retention. Registered apprenticeship models have demonstrated success in both helping the current providers and training new professionals, and we need to support these programs now. Please vote yes on this important bill for our keiki.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

With gratitude

Leilani Kailiawa

LATE

HB-549-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 8:54:12 AM
Testimony for HRE on 3/17/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christina Simmons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

3.16.25
To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair and
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
From: Christina Simmons, Kaneohe resident
Subject: Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program

Please support establishing an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program to be administered by the University of Hawaii. This program provides needed financial support for students in the early learning sector of our economy, a woefully underpaid and under supported group that is an important gear in the engine of our economy.

Sincerely,

Christina Simmons, MPH, IBCLC (emeritus)