

Honolulu, Hawaii

Feb 12, 2008

RE: H.B. No. 2973
H.D. 1

Honorable Calvin K.Y. Say
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2008
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred H.B. No. 2973 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to help Hawaii's children reach their full potential as individuals and citizens, beginning at birth, by:

- (1) Creating the Early Learning Council (Council) to govern the state's early learning system;
- (2) Establishing an early learning system (System) that ensures a continuum of quality early learning opportunities for children from birth to age five throughout the state; and
- (3) Establishing and appropriating funds for the Keiki First Steps Program (Program) which focuses on the coordination, improvement, and expansion of existing programs and services within the System for three- and four-year-old children in the state, with priority for underserved or at-risk children.

The University of Hawaii, Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, Aloha United Way, Hawaii P-20 Initiative,



People Attentive To Children, Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC), HAEYC-Maui Chapter, HAEYC-Kauai Chapter, and numerous concerned individuals testified in support of this bill. The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force, Kamehameha Schools, Hawaii Business Roundtable, Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture, and a concerned individual supported the intent of this measure. The Department of Education (DOE), Hawaii Educational Policy Center, and a concerned individual supported this bill with amendments.

Your Committee has amended this bill by:

- (1) Clarifying the purpose language;
- (2) Establishing the System, Council, and Program provisions in statute;
- (3) Clarifying that the System is to be a comprehensive, cohesive, and sustainable system of voluntary educational programs to benefit all children from birth until the time they enter kindergarten, and maximizes their potential for success upon entry into kindergarten;
- (4) Allowing the Council to take actions to increase the numbers in and enhance the quality of the early learning workforce, including offering scholarships, and permits the Council to award grants and contracts to qualified early childhood educators, community-based training programs, and higher education institutions for those purposes;
- (5) Changing the membership of the Council to 13 members by removing the representative from a government agency to represent federal children's programs and services, the member appointed by the President of the Senate, the member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the seven members appointed by the Governor who represent various interests in the early learning community, and replacing them with:
 - (A) The Director of Labor and Industrial Relations or the Director's designee;
 - (B) The director of the Head Start State Collaboration Office or the director's designee;



- (C) A representative of the military child care system in the Hawaii region;
 - (D) One representative from a private institute of higher education that offers early childhood education programs;
 - (E) The chief executive officer of the Kamehameha Schools or the chief executive officer's designee;
 - (F) A representative of child care program providers;
 - (G) A representative from the Keiki Funders Network, which is a network of public and private funders that support early learning; and
 - (H) A representative of the Association of Mayors;
- (6) Specifying that the chairperson selected by the Council shall be a representative from the private sector;
 - (7) Authorizes the Council to contract with State agencies to administer various components and programs of the System;
 - (8) Specifying that the System, as well as the Program, shall include center-based settings, family child care, family-child interaction learning settings, and home-based instruction;
 - (9) Clarifying that the System shall provide high-quality early childhood development and early learning experiences;
 - (10) Specifying that the System, as well as the Program, shall offer opportunities for parent and community engagement and parent education and support;
 - (11) Clarifying that component of the Program relating to identification and implementation of curricula and methods shall include research-based early learning program models for at-risk children from three to four years of age;



- (12) Including in the definition of "at-risk children", children:
- (A) Who are eligible for special education services;
 - (B) Who are English as a Second Language learners;
 - (C) Who reside within the boundaries of public schools that are in need of improvement based on the criteria of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110); and
 - (D) Whose family income is no more than two hundred per cent of the federal poverty level;
- (13) Increasing the supply of suitable classrooms for early childhood programs statewide by requiring DOE and the Department of Human Services to develop suitable pre-plus classrooms on DOE campuses statewide, for early childhood education programs; and
- (14) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2973, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2973, H.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Education,



ROY TAKUMI, Chair



