



HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
Teaching Today for Hawaii's Tomorrow

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May 6, 2008

The Honorable Mazie K. Hirono
U.S. House of Representatives
1229 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-1102

Roger K. Takabayashi
President

Wil Okabe
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Dear Congresswoman Hirono:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association thanks you for championing the *Providing Resources Early for Kids Act of 2007* – the PRE-K Act – which will help prepare all children for lifelong learning and ensure access to voluntary, high-quality early education. It behooves us to make the necessary investment in the PRE-K Act, a smart, cost-effective way to underwrite the future of our youth and nation.

Strong evidence links high-quality early education with later scholastic success. This has been repeatedly evidenced by first-hand experience. Hawaii's public school teachers consistently report that children who participated in pre-school education programs were better prepared when entering kindergarten, demonstrated greater achievement there, and performed at a higher level in subsequent classes as well.

While our state has the Preschool Open Doors Project, which provides subsidies to low-income households for early education, the demand continues to grow exponentially. Our state governments need support and the PRE-K act is vital if *all* our children are to arrive in their kindergarten classrooms ready to learn and succeed.

While we understand that preschool programs may not be appropriate for every child, the PRE-K Act ensures that high-quality early education programs are readily accessible nationwide for those families who want their children to participate. *Every* child deserves *every* opportunity to help them succeed, not only in school, but also later in life.

In Hawaii, as well as nationwide, local legislators have worked and voiced support for stronger statewide early education programs, but funding and other barriers remain. The PRE-K Act is needed to bring their work to fruition. In addition to enhanced kindergarten performance, recent studies have shown a positive correlation between high-quality early education programs and improved math and language skills, higher graduation rates and increased lifetime earnings. Support for this measure is an investment in a better quality of life for the future generation of our great country.

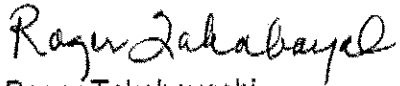


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Finally, in addition to thanking you for your sponsorship of the PRE-K Act, we ask that you call upon your colleagues to support this critical piece of legislation as well. Every child in America deserves an academic foundation that will open the door to full participation in our democratic society and all the benefits that includes.

Sincerely,



Roger Takabayashi
President

RT:jby