

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

721

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 17 , 2023

RE: H.B. No. 961  
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2023  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred H.B. No. 961, H.D. 1, entitled:

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

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Appropriate funds for the Preschool Open Doors Program to expand access to preschool and implement program changes required by previous acts of the Legislature;
- (2) Open the Preschool Open Doors Program application process to eligible three-year-old children;
- (3) Expand the Executive Office on Early Learning's Public Pre-Kindergarten Program to serve three-year-old children;
- (4) Expand the types of entities from which a Preschool Open Doors service provider may obtain accreditation; and
- (5) Authorize the Preschool Open Doors Special Fund to accept federal funds.

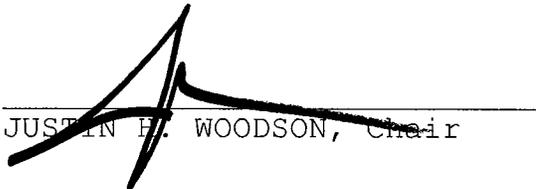


Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Department of Human Services, Executive Office on Early Learning, Early Learning Board, Hui for Excellence in Education, Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, Hawaii Council of Private Schools, Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii, Kamehameha Schools, Early Childhood Action Strategy, Commit to Keiki, and two individuals. Your Committee received testimony in support of the intent of this measure from the University of Hawai'i System and Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, and one individual.

Your Committee finds that providing children access to high-quality preschools will better prepare them for success in the future. Your Committee further finds that to meet the education needs of young children, the Executive Office on Early Learning implemented the Public Pre-Kindergarten Program and provides free public pre-kindergarten options in thirty-seven classrooms across thirty-four Department of Education campuses. Your Committee notes that child care subsidies and tuition assistance programs, such as Preschool Open Doors, help eligible families afford child care and preschool tuition rates, thereby alleviating the financial burden many families face when attempting to access early learning opportunities. This measure expands both programs and will provide more families with access to affordable high-quality early learning opportunities.

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. 961, H.D. 1, and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Finance.

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

  
JUSTIN E. WOODSON, Chair



