

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 17 2023

RE: S.B. No. 239
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2023
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 239 entitled:

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

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish within the Department of Human Services' Child Care Assistance Program, a Child Care Accreditation Program to support licensed or registered child care providers to obtain accreditation from a national early learning accrediting organization;
- (2) Extend the deadline by which unaccredited service providers of the Preschool Open Doors Program must commence the national early learning accrediting organization accreditation process and obtain accreditation;
- (3) Appropriate an unspecified amount of funds for the establishment, implementation, and administration of the Child Care Accreditation Program, including funding for one full time equivalent (1.0 FTE) position; and
- (4) Appropriate an unspecified amount of funds to be deposited into the Child Care Grant Program Special Fund



to award grants to private child care providers participating in the Child Care Accreditation Program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Executive Office on Early Learning, Early Learning Board, Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, Early Childhood Action Strategy Project, AAUW of Hawaii, Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists, and ten individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Human Services and Department of the Attorney General.

Your Committee finds that the Preschool Open Doors Program is the State's school readiness program that serves low- to moderate-income families whose children will be eligible for kindergarten in the following school year. The program provides critical subsidies for income-eligible families sending their children to a licensed preschool during the year prior to kindergarten entry. To ensure that children participating in the program are receiving certain levels of care, existing law requires service providers who have not obtained accreditation from a national early learning accrediting organization by July 1, 2022, to start the accreditation process no later than July 1, 2024, and be accredited by July 1, 2029. However, the effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic have delayed this process for many child care providers. This measure will provide the additional time and funds needed for child care providers to obtain the necessary accreditation.

Your Committee acknowledges the concerns raised by the Department of Human Services regarding the eligibility requirements for the Child Care Accreditation Program. Therefore, amendments to this measure are necessary to address these concerns.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the Child Care Accreditation Program shall be established within the Department of Human Services' Child Care Subsidy Program Office;
- (2) Expanding the accrediting entity to organizations approved by the Director of Human Services;

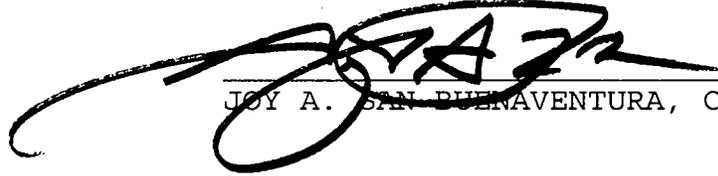


- (3) Inserting a definition for "eligible child care provider" to mean a child care facility that is not part of or owned or operated by a private educational institution; provided that an organization or individual that owns or operates both a private educational institution and a child care facility may be deemed an "eligible child care provider" if the organization or individual can provide evidence that the operations and finances of the private educational institution are completely separate from the operations and finances of the child care facility so that it is clear that a child care grant would not support or benefit the private educational institution in violation of article X, section 1 of the Hawaii State Constitution;
- (4) Allowing the funds appropriated for the Child Care Accreditation Program to be used to fund the annual accreditation fees incurred by eligible child care providers participating in the Preschool Open Doors program;
- (5) Amending section 1 to reflect its amended purpose;
- (6) Inserting an effective date of December 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (7) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 239, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 239, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



