



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

March 31, 2025

To: Senator Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Ways and Means Committee

From: Elaine Yamashita, Chair
Early Learning Board

Re: HB549 HD3 SD1 support

Aloha, Honorable Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Senate Way and Means committee:

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 SD1, 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.

We realize that these are uncertain times and ask that you consider any funding for this program as an important investment in early educators who will have positive impact on keiki and their 'ohana.

Mahalo for your consideration and support of this bill.

Sincerely,

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



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 Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

SUBJECT: Testimony on H.B. No. 549, S.D. 1 – RELATING TO AN EARLY LEARNING
APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM.

Committee: WAM
Date: Wednesday, April 2, 2025
Time: 10:01 a.m.
Location: Conference room 211

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, S.D. 1, 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:

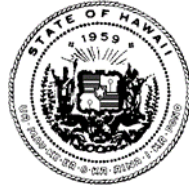
- Addressing workforce shortages in the early childhood field by supporting recruitment and retention;
- Providing competitive compensation and benefits to ensure employees are valued; and

- 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.

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 LAWE LAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 31, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 549 HD3 SD1 – RELATING TO AN EARLY LEARNING APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM.**

Hearing: Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 10:01 a.m.
Conference Room 211, 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 7/31/2025. (SD1)

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 House 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 Finance (HD3) 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.”

The Senate Committee on Higher Education and Education (SD1) amended the measure by:

- (1) Inserting an effective date of July 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 549 HD3 SD1
RELATING TO AN EARLY LEARNING APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senate Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol

April 2, 2025

10:01 am

Conference Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 549 HD3 SD1**, 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 SD1, 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.

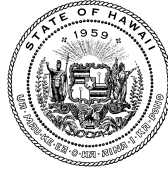
As we know, early childhood education is crucial for the long-term academic and life success of our keiki. During the early years of life, a child's brain development is most rapid, and the experiences and education they receive during this time can shape their future. Quality early learning programs 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 SD1 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 SD1**, 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
BOARD OF EDUCATION**
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

10:01 a.m.

Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211

**Measure: House Bill 549 H.D. 3 S.D. 1, Relating to an Early Learning
Apprenticeship Grant Program**

Purpose of Measure:

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. Requires an annual report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/31/2050.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Board of Education (Board) supports House Bill 549 HD3 SD1 as a means to recruit and retain the professionals who are paramount to the high-quality learning experiences needed to fulfill the promise of early education.

The ability to expand access to early learning opportunities also relies heavily on efforts to grow and support our early educator workforce.

The Board defers to the University of Hawai'i regarding implementation and funding.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Board.

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

April 1, 2025

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State Capitol, Conference Room 211
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Dela Cruz

And Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

SUBJECT: Measure H.B. No. 549 H.D. 3 S.D. 1 – 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 S.D. 1.

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 Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
April 1, 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, while also supporting families in securing employment opportunities.

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



Date: March 31, 2025

To: Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for **HB549 HD3 SD1**, 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 SD1, 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 SD1**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Hearing Date: **Wednesday, April 2, 2025, 10:01 AM, Conf. Rm 221**

To: Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 549, HD 3, SD1 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, SD1** 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.



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

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Meli James, *Board Chair*
Micah Kāne
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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 Ways and Means

Bill Number:

HB 549 SD1, Relating to An Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program

Hearing Date and Time: April 2, 2025, at 10:01am (Room 211)

Re:

Testimony of Holomua Collaborative in support

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

We write in support of HB 549 SD1, Relating to An Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program. The purpose of HB 549 SD1 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 SD1 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 SD1 and urge you to pass it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Josh Wisch', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Josh Wisch
President & Executive Director

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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, S.D. 1 – Relating to an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program

Hearing: Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 10:01 AM, Conference Room 211

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

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, S.D. 1**. 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 and 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. It is an essential component of our economy, enabling parents and 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 and guardians can work with confidence, 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, S.D. 1.**



**Parents And
Children Together**
BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 549 HD3 SD1 Relating to an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program

TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, & Members,
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO
DATE: April 2, 2025 at 10:01 AM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 549 HD3 SD1, 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.



LATE

To: Senator Dela Cruz, Chair, Senator Moriwaki, Vice Chair - Senate Ways and Means Committee

Re: Support for HB 549

From: HE'E Coalition, Deborah Bond-Upson, Interim Director

Date: April 1, 2025

Hui for Excellence in Education, or "HE'E," is a statewide coalition of diverse stakeholders committed to working collaboratively to identify opportunities to improve public education. We work to provide Hawai'i families and organizations with a resource for educational policy.

HE'E strongly supports HN 549, "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."

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 a way to enter a profession with experience while progressing with educational degrees. This could create a virtuous cycle supporting quality child care-providing experience to increase new entries to the career, to increase capacity for early childhood learning centers, and to provide a stronger beginning for our keiki. Towards this end, we strongly urge you to support SB426.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts.

HE'E Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21
Alliance for Place Based Learning
American Civil Liberties Union
Atherton YMCA
Education Institute of Hawai'i
*Faith Action for Community Equity
Fresh Leadership LLC
Girl Scouts Hawai'i
*HawaiiKidsCAN
*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance
*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars
*Hawai'i Children's Action Network
Hawai'i Education Association
Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition
*Hawai'i State PTSA
Hawai'i State Student Council
Hawai'i State Teachers Association
Head Start Collaboration Office
It's All About Kids*INPEACE

Joint Venture Education Forum
Junior Achievement of Hawaii
Kamehameha Schools
Kanu Hawai'i
Kaua'i Ho'okele Council
Keiki to Career Kaua'i
Kupu A'e
*Leaders for the Next Generation
Learning First
McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds
Native Hawaiian Education Council
Our Public School
*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning
*Parents and Children Together
*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i
Special Education Provider Alliance
*Teach for America
The Learning Coalition
US PACOM
University of Hawai'i College of Education
*Youth Service Hawai'i

Voting Members () Voting member organizations vote on action items while individual and non-voting participants may collaborate on all efforts within the Coalition.*



LATE

To: Senator Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Ways and Means Committee

Re: Support for HB 549

From: Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i

Date: April 1, 2025

Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i has over 1400 members across the state working to support our public schools and to advocate for families. Our members are mainly parents and guardians concerned with the education and care of our keiki. Given how hard it is to support a family here while providing quality care, we recognize the need for more trained early learning providers. We do not have enough places in early learning for our children. Expanding our trained workforce is key to meeting this critical need.

We strongly supports HN 549, "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."

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 a way to enter a profession with experience while progressing with educational degrees. This could create a virtuous cycle supporting quality child care- providing experience to increase new entries to the career, to increase capacity for early childhood learning centers, and to provide a stronger beginning for our keiki.

Towards this end, we strongly urge you to support SB426.

Thank you for your work to support our Hawai'i families and to protect the potential of our precious children.

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:10:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and committee members,

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.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Chloe "Pua'ena" Vierra-Villanueva

‘Ohana Leadership Council

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:42:03 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elba Reyes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We desperately need more programs that help both the person get a job & our children be safe due to trained properly 🙏

Mahalo,

Elba Reyes

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:29:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexandria Sisson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Moriwaki. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB549.

Our state’s families are struggling to find affordable and high quality child care to support their young children’s development across all islands. HB549 addresses one of the most pressing challenges faced by Hawai‘i’s early childhood care and education sector: the recruitment and retention of a well-trained workforce. This bill incentivizes providers to join apprenticeship models, invest in their staff and communities, and retain qualified and committed staff within their programs– all of which directly contribute to the stabilization and affordability of Hawai‘i’s ECCE sector, and benefit:

Early Learning Providers: By providing financial support to providers who otherwise would not be able to participate, this program offsets operational costs and allows providers to increase staff wages and retention, allowing for more funds to be invested in program quality and preventing program closures in our already-limited market. Currently, there is only 1 licensed ECCE seat available for every four young children in Hawai‘i, with demand only growing.

ECE Workers: This program provides an “earn while you learn” workforce pathway that allows apprentices to retain full-time employment. This increases accessibility of ECCE credentials and workforce entry, as well as provides wage parity for existing staff, in turn reducing inequities and chronic turnover in the field and negatively impacting the number of child care slots available.

Children and Families: By investing on well-trained and well-compensated staff, this program allows for providers to develop high-quality programming and keeps more programs open with lower tuition, allowing for families to access the high-quality care their children deserve. This bill prioritizes the infant and toddler care market, which suffers the smallest capacity– 11%– of licensed child care slots per child across the islands. As of 2022, only 12% of Hawai‘i’s 1- to 2-year olds are served and 3% of infants.

Employers: Child care shortages directly and negatively impact workforce participation. This program supports parents in staying in or returning to the workforce by increasing options for accessible child care. This bill provides a vital step towards strengthening Hawai‘i’s ECCE landscape and the overall wellbeing of our families. Through this legislation, we provide support

to directly impact our early learning providers, invest in our vital ECCE workforce, and lay the foundation for a greater system of sustainable care for our families and children.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 549.

March 31, 2025

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair
and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St. CR 211
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: **In strong support of H.B. 549 HD 3 SD 1 – Relating to the Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program**

Aloha,

My name is Dr. Terry Lock and 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.

In Hawai'i, many parents 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 administered by the University of Hawai'i offers a tangible solution to these pressing issues by:

1. **Supporting the Early Learning Professionals:** The grant program will provide funding to support 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 adding more child care slots for young children. 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 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 SD 1 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 SD 1.

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 6:23:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
CRISTINE NATIVIDAD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of Bill HB549- education is the key to our future. The children of Hawaii are in desperate need of adequate childcare. There aren't enough preschool establishments or affordable preschools for children to attend. People may not be incentivized to work due to low wages. This causes a burden for our families, and is detrimental to our children. Please provide funding that will allow UH Manoa to open up their apprenticeship grant program. Thank you,

Date: April 1, 2025

**To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means Committee
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

Re: Testimony in Support of HB549, HD 3, SD1 relating to the Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 549, HD 3, SD1, the Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program. As an early childhood educator, trainer, and higher education faculty, I strongly support an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program to increase recruitment and retention of the early learning workforce.

Early childhood care and education are the foundation of lifelong learning, workforce development, and community well-being. Research consistently shows that high-quality early childhood care and education programs improves school readiness, reduces achievement gaps, and leads to better long-term economic and social outcomes. However, despite its critical importance, the field faces significant workforce shortages and high turnover due to low wages and limited professional development opportunities.

This bill addresses these challenges by establishing a structured apprenticeship program that allows aspiring early learning educators to earn while they learn. By combining hands-on experience with formal education, apprenticeships provide a sustainable pathway to professional growth. These programs will also help recruit and retain a diverse workforce, ensuring children benefit from high-quality, culturally responsive care.

Several states have successfully implemented early learning apprenticeship programs, leading to higher retention rates and improved educator effectiveness. By investing in this model, our state can strengthen the early learning workforce and provide young children with the high-quality learning environments they deserve.

I urge you to support **HB549, HD 3, SD1** and invest in the future of our children, families, and educators. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Brenda Watanabe
Assistant Professor, ECE

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 7:24:16 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Valledor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hawai'i State Capitol

415 South Beretania St.

Honolulu, HI 96813

Senate Ways and Means Committee on Apr 2, 2025

FROM: Kendra Liang, Jessica Johnson, Christine Valledor

March 31, 2025

Support for H.B. No. 549 H.D. No. 3 S.D. No. 1 : Relating to Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program

We are public preschool teachers and graduate students studying Early Childhood Education.

We strongly urge you to pass HB549, Relating to Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program.

We have collectively been working as teachers in the State of Hawaii between 3-13 years. We, like many others, began to notice symptoms of teacher burnout at varying times in our careers. Recently, we have begun to rediscover the joy in our careers of being as early childhood educators thanks to collaborating with other early childhood educators in the field. These are the reasons that we believe have contributed to this positive change for our experience, which this bill might also bring forth for other educators like us in the field:

- Opportunity to attend professional learning communities (PLCs) with our district or state-wide teachers on a regular basis

Periodic time spent away from teaching in the classroom allows teachers to gain new teaching strategies, learn about child development and have intellectual discussions with our colleagues. This contributes to the betterment of teaching practice by making us feel more equipped as teachers and refreshed going back into our classrooms to apply what we learned the next day.

- The quality of professional development matters

Meetings that are PowerPoint lectures as professional development do not address or feel supportive of our needs as educators and contribute to the early burnout we once felt. Much like teaching our youth, when professional development for educators is relevant, held in comfortable settings, involves engaging activities, hands-on materials, and interactive experiences, the training sessions or workshops become not only useful, but also enjoyable. This adds to our motivation to learn as educators, which in turn directly positively impacts our students. Impactful professional development requires appropriate funding, thus apprenticeship is an ideal model for training.

- Mentors/mentorship, collaboration, and networking opportunities

Something that has kept us afloat in our careers has been the personal relationships that we have developed with mentors. As educators, we are expected to be responsive to the mental and

emotional well-being of our students and develop positive connections with them to increase their motivation to be in school. Our mentors model this for us as educators. They alleviate the strain of teaching that we sometimes feel, which, when neglected, results in burnout and leaving teaching. Investing in professional interactions with experienced mentors improves instructional quality. This, in turn, benefits both teachers and students. Mentors also are encouraged to take on the added responsibility of supporting others in the workforce if they are able to receive stipends for their efforts.

As we have slowly come to rediscover the joy in our careers due to the above-mentioned reasons, others in similar positions and backgrounds to us may also benefit if this bill were to pass. High-quality, hands-on training from the early state of our career must prevent burn out from happening. That is why high-quality, hands-on training from the early stage of teachers' careers must be provided in order to prevent burn-out from happening.

We also believe that improving the compensation for wages or salaries of all early childhood educators in the State of Hawai'i, regardless of the sector they are working in, will greatly improve the retention rate that we have been struggling with as a field of practice. We all know colleagues who have after-school night jobs to stay financially afloat, which also leads to days of exhaustion trying to teach in the classroom. Mentors' stipends and compensation rates not only would increase job satisfaction, but it would also help alleviate the financial burdens many experienced educators face in this economy as well as acknowledge their contributions to their mentees and the broader workforce. We believe that financial support for early learning program service providers would offer a glimmer of hope to our fellow educators and will encourage more teachers to rise as leaders in the field of early childhood education and train up the next generation of educators.

For these reasons, we sincerely urge the committee to pass HB549.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our position.

Sincerely yours,

Kendra Liang, Jessica Johnson, Christine Valledor

Report Title: UH; Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program; Childcare; Early Learning Opportunities; Professions and Occupations; Reports; Appropriation (\$)

Description: 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. Requires an annual report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD3)

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 10:42:48 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Samonte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB549.

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 10:52:40 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB549, which creates an apprenticeship program for the early learning workforce.

To me, this bill shows that we have multiple ways to address the challenges we face in early learning. This federally recognized program and innovative strategy will help us recruit, retain, and upskill early learning professionals. When we commit to programs like this, we are supporting hard-working families with children while creating more jobs and career pathways for locals.

Mahalo nui loa

Leilani Kailiawa

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 10:58:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Testifying for Kauai Democratic Party/ HCAN Ohana Leadership Council	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB549, which creates an apprenticeship program for early learning workforce.

This bill shows that we have multiple ways to address the challenges we face in early learning. This federally recognized program and innovative strategy will help us recruit, retain, and upskill early learning professionals. When we commit to programs like this, we are supporting hard-working families with children while creating more jobs and career pathways for locals.

Mahalo!

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 11:02:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aaron J. Levine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB549 which creates an apprenticeship program for early learning workforce.

The hardships that our families and keiki face will only continue to grow if we do not invest the necessary resources into a robust early learning workforce. We need to recruit, retain, and upskill early learning professionals in order to meet the challenges that hard-working families and keiki face. Such a program will also help create better jobs and career pathways for Hawaii's workforce.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aaron Levine

March 31, 2025

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

Senate Ways and Means Committee on Apr 2, 2025

Subject: Support for H.B. No. 549 H.D. No. 3 S.D. No. 1 : Relating to Early Learning
Apprenticeship Grant Program

From: Kiyomi Umezawa

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

My name is Kiyomi Umezawa, an early childhood educator and I support this bill. 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.

This legislation aligns with our 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 care and education for our young children's success in school and in life.

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 11:19:31 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Iwalani Hall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB549, which creates an apprenticeship program for early learning workforce.

To me, this bill shows that we have multiple ways to address the challenges we face in early learning. This federally recognized program and innovative strategy will help us recruit, retain, and upskill early learning professionals. When we commit to programs like this, we are supporting hard-working families with children while creating more jobs and career pathways for locals.

Mahalo!

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 11:19:43 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharleen Nakamoto Levine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB549, which creates an apprenticeship program for early learning workforce. Young keiki are not the same as older keiki or adults, so workforce that care for them can do a better job if they have the opportunity to participate in early learning workforce training.

To me, this bill shows that we have multiple ways to address the challenges we face in early learning. This federally recognized program and innovative strategy will help us recruit, retain, and upskill early learning professionals. When we commit to programs like this, we are supporting hard-working families with children while creating more jobs and career pathways for locals.

Mahalo!

Sharleen Nakamoto Levine

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 11:40:41 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB549, which creates an apprenticeship program for early learning workforce.

To me, this bill shows that we have multiple ways to address the challenges we face in early learning. This federally recognized program and innovative strategy will help us recruit, retain, and upskill early learning professionals. When we commit to programs like this, we are supporting hard-working families with children while creating more jobs and career pathways for locals.

--Shay Chan Hodges

LATE

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 12:14:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deanna Espinas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please continue to support this important bill. Thank you!

LATE

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 12:18:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colleen Achuela	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As someone who works directly with families and children in the field of early childcare, I see daily the immense challenges posed by the lack of qualified professionals in our programs. Early learning services are a cornerstone of a child's development, providing crucial support during their formative years. Yet the limited availability of trained service providers often forces families to wait for assistance or navigate a system that cannot meet their needs adequately. The Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program proposed by this bill would be a transformative solution, offering financial support for both aspiring early learning students and current service providers. By enabling more individuals to pursue careers in early education without the financial barriers, we can cultivate the skilled workforce necessary to care for our keiki and help them thrive.

Investing in this program means investing in our future. Early education has ripple effects that extend beyond individual families—it strengthens our communities and bolsters the foundation of our society. Supporting this bill acknowledges that access to quality childcare is not just a privilege but a right that should be afforded to all families. It is an opportunity to address critical workforce shortages while creating pathways for individuals passionate about nurturing young minds. The Legislature's support would demonstrate its commitment to the well-being of Hawaii's children, families, and educators, ensuring that our youngest generations have the resources they need to succeed.

Me ke Aloha

LATE

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 1:53:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB549, which creates an apprenticeship program for early learning workforce.

To me, this bill shows that we have multiple ways to address the challenges we face in early learning. This federally recognized program and innovative strategy will help us recruit, retain, and upskill early learning professionals. When we commit to programs like this, we are supporting hard-working families with children while creating more jobs and career pathways for locals.

Mahalo!

Andrew Isoda

Lahaina, Mau'i

LATE

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 3:12:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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.

LATE

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 6:20:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB549, which creates an apprenticeship program for early learning workforce.

To me, this bill shows that we have multiple ways to address the challenges we face in early learning. This federally recognized program and innovative strategy will help us recruit, retain, and upskill early learning professionals. When we commit to programs like this, we are supporting hard-working families with children while creating more jobs and career pathways for locals.

Mahalo!

LATE

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 7:07:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Moriwaki, and Committee of Ways and Means Members,

I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB549, which creates an apprenticeship program for early learning workforce.

To me, this bill shows that we have multiple ways to address the challenges we face in early learning. This federally recognized program and innovative strategy will help us recruit, retain, and upskill early learning professionals. When we commit to programs like this, we are supporting hard-working families with children while creating more jobs and career pathways for locals.

Mahalo,

Caroline Kunitake

LATE

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 7:12:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB549, which creates an apprenticeship program for an early learning workforce.

To me, this bill shows that we have multiple ways to address the challenges we face in early learning. This federally recognized program and innovative strategy will help us recruit, retain, and upskill early learning professionals. When we commit to programs like this, we are supporting hard-working families with children while creating more jobs and career pathways for locals.

Mahalo!

Beth Anderson

LATE

HB-549-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 8:49:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassia Simms-Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB549, which creates an apprenticeship program for early learning workforce.

To me, this bill shows that we have multiple ways to address the challenges we face in early learning. This federally recognized program and innovative strategy will help us recruit, retain, and upskill early learning professionals. When we commit to programs like this, we are supporting hard-working families with children while creating more jobs and career pathways for locals.

Mahalo!