



SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
Ke Ke'ena O Ka Hope Kia'āina

The 33rd Legislature, State of Hawaii
House Committee on Finance
February 24, 2025

Testimony on
H.B. 692 – RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of H.B. 692, H.D. 1** which expands the preschool open door program's eligibility criteria to allow more keiki and their ohana to be served by this program.

Access to preschool is a social justice issue in our state and we know that children who attend high-quality preschool are much better prepared for success. H.B. 692, H.D. 1 aligns with our *Ready Keiki* initiative, the Administration's multi-faceted plan to expand access to high-quality childcare and preschool. Our focus is on ensuring that our keiki are ready for Kindergarten and creating economic stability for families returning to the workforce. The success of *Ready Keiki* depends on a multi-pronged approach which includes building and refurbishing classrooms, creating teaching pathways for educators, and expanding the Preschool Open Doors program for local families. The amendments proposed in H.B. 692, H.D. 1 are critical to ensuring we have enough classrooms for all keiki.

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

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 22, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 692 HD1 – RELATING TO PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM**

Hearing: Monday, February 24, 2025, Time 12:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the bill and provides comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to expand the Preschool Open Doors Program's eligibility criteria. Repeals the requirement that Preschool Open Doors Program providers be accredited. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1).

DHS appreciates the amendments of the Committee on Human Services & Homelessness:

- 1) Clarifying that the Preschool Open Doors Program shall continuously serve children who are in the three years prior to kindergarten entry until they enter kindergarten;
- 2) Clarifying the types of child care programs that are eligible to participate in the Preschool Open Doors Program;
- 3) Specifying that a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the Preschool Open Doors Program may share in the costs of the Program through a copayment based on need rather than an amount of up to one dollar;
- 4) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- 5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Department and the proponents of this bill have discussed to gain a better understanding of the need for inclusion of family child care homes for the Preschool Open Doors program and the Department's concerns with ensuring the child care setting is suitable in preparing children for their eventual entry into kindergarten. The conversations also addressed ensuring that children participating in one Preschool Open Doors program year are given consideration to continue their participation in the subsequent Preschool Open Doors program year, provided they are still eligible. As a result of these discussions, the Department has reviewed the proponent's suggested amendments and agrees with the suggestions.

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



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

February 22, 2025

To: Representative Yamashita, Chair
Representative Takenouchi, Vice-chair
House Finance Committee

From: Elaine Yamashita, Chair
Early Learning Board

Re: HB692 HD1 support

Aloha, Honorable Chair Yamashita, Vice-chair Takenouchi, and members of the House Finance 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 ELB supports HB 692 HD1, which would allow families with children ages two up to kindergarten entry to apply for Preschool Open Doors (POD) subsidies. This expansion of state subsidies will greatly benefit Hawai'i's working families.

POD subsidies to families support families who need care and education for their child beyond the school day and school year. Consistency and routine help optimize each child's development, and being able to stay in the same program year round, with caring teachers, provides that.

The Early Learning Board oversees the EOEL, and both ELB and EOEL have a responsibility to coordinate the many systems that make up early learning opportunities in our state. Support of the expansion of POD funding is one of the ways the board can support all children in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill.

Elaine Yamashita
Chair, Early Learning Board
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: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

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

SUBJECT: Testimony on H.B. No. 692, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM.
Committee: FIN
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025
Time: 12:00 p.m.
Location: Conference Room 308

Executive Office on Early Learning's Position: **SUPPORT**

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) offers the following comments in support of H.B. No. 692, H.D. 1 and defers to the Department of Human Services (DHS) regarding implementation and funding.

The Preschool Open Doors program plays a crucial role in helping families afford quality child care. This legislation will expand access to early learning opportunities for Hawai'i's families by expanding eligibility for the Preschool Open Doors program to include 2-year-olds (children three years prior to kindergarten entry) and by repealing the accreditation requirement for program providers.

Community-based early learning providers are vital to a strong, mixed-delivery early learning system, offering families flexibility in choosing care that best meets their needs. Many of these providers also have the capacity to offer full-day and year-round care, which is not offered by most free public prekindergarten programs but is essential for many working families.

Reducing financial barriers to community-based early learning programs also enables more parents and caregivers to participate in the workforce while ensuring their children receive the early childhood development and learning experiences critical to lifelong well-being.

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 H.B. No. 692, H.D. 1.

**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

February 21, 2025

The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
And Members of the House Committee on Finance
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Yamashita
And Members of the House Committee on Finance:

SUBJECT: Measure H.B. No. 692 H.D. 1 – Relating to the Preschool Open
Doors Program

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. No. 692 H.D. 1.

As it stands, the Preschool Open Doors Program (POD) is a vital resource for families with 3- and 4-year-old children, offering much-needed financial assistance to make child care more affordable and accessible. By expanding eligibility to include 2-year-olds, this bill acknowledges the importance of early childhood development during these formative years and addresses a substantial gap in child care support for families with younger children.

Child care expenses are one of the largest financial burdens for families on O'ahu, with some households paying upwards of 48 percent of their income on child care tuition. Expanding the POD program to include 2-year-olds will help alleviate these pressures, allowing families to remain in the workforce, achieve greater economic stability, and provide a strong foundation for their keiki to grow and thrive.

We also strongly support efforts to enhance quality in early learning programs. The Department of Human Services recently established an accreditation program to promote accreditation and other quality improvement measures. Since the POD program is vital in expanding family access to early learning opportunities, we support removing the accreditation requirement in this bill. Other complementary programs are already in place to support quality improvement efforts, ensuring that expanded access is not done at the expense of quality.

The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
And Members of the House Committee on Finance
February 21, 2025
Page 2

This bill reflects a balanced approach to supporting families by addressing affordability, expanding access and ensuring quality remains uncompromised. By removing barriers, this bill will open doors for more families to access affordable and reliable care while creating better economic opportunities. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Sincerely,

Anton C. Krucky
Director Designate



Kamehameha Schools®

House Committee on Finance

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Date: February 24, 2025

Where: Conference Room 308

TESTIMONY

By Dr. Wai'ale'ale Arroyo
Kamehameha Schools

RE: HB 692, HD1, Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program

E ka Luna Ho'omalua Yamashita, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalua Takenouchi, a me nā lālā o ke Kōmike Waiwai o ka Hale o nā Lunamaka'āinana, aloha nui kākou. My name is Dr. Wai'ale'ale Arroyo, Vice President of Hi'ialo at Kamehameha Schools.

Kamehameha Schools **supports** HB 692, HD1, which expands the eligibility for the Preschool Open Doors (POD) Program making it easier for Hawai'i's families to access early learning opportunities.

The expansion to 2-year-olds will allow all families, including Native Hawaiian families, to access early learning opportunities earlier, essentially giving keiki three years of preschool preparation. We also commend the adjustments to the administration of the child care provider accreditation program. These additions minimize costs, giving providers a supportive pathway to achieve accreditation.

Founded in 1887 by the legacy of Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, Kamehameha Schools (KS) is a private, educational, charitable trust committed to improving the capability and well-being of Native Hawaiian people through education. KS envisions a thriving lāhui where learners, grounded in Christian and Hawaiian values, grow into 'ōiwi leaders who inspire and contribute to their communities, both locally and globally.

'A'oha 'ulu e loa'a i ka pōkole o ka lou. There is no success without preparation.

Date: February 21, 2025

To: House Committee on Finance
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for **HB692 HD1**, Relating to the Preschool Open Doors 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 supports, with amendments, HB692 HD1, which would expand the Preschool Open Doors program's eligibility criteria and significantly increase access to early learning programs for young children and their families. *No appropriation is requested as part of this measure.*

High-quality early learning programs provide children with the experiences and environments that are pivotal to school readiness and lead to improved educational, economic, health and well-being outcomes for children, lasting into adulthood. The Preschool Open Doors (POD) program currently provides key financial assistance to families to facilitate access for 3 and 4-year-old children to these child care and early learning programs. The POD program changes proposed in this measure would expand eligibility to 2-year old children and decrease some of the additional barriers that have restricted and/or are projected to limit full uptake of the assistance available to, and critically needed by families.

By expanding POD eligibility to include 2-year-olds, this bill acknowledges the importance of early childhood development during these formative years and addresses a substantial gap in child care support for families with younger children. The bill will also reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding child care expenses. Hawai'i has some of the highest child care tuition rates in the nation, with expenses for families comparable to, and at times even exceeding, housing costs. Assistance for 2-year olds, as well as the proposed adjustment to continuous services will alleviate financial pressures, enabling families to remain in the workforce and achieve greater economic stability, while simultaneously laying a strong foundation necessary for our keiki to grow and thrive.

Expansion of the child care settings in which POD assistance may be applied, will also be instrumental to increasing children's access to early learning opportunities. Inclusion of family child care homes, and removal of the accreditation requirement for child care centers will significantly increase the availability of child care seats for children in the current landscape where capacity and vacancies are highly limited. We strongly encourage the continued promotion of program quality through the accreditation support programs recently established by

the Department of Human Services, and the rate incentives embedded in the POD payment structure, without the limitations to choice and access posed by an accreditation *requirement*.

We would like to especially highlight the inclusion of family child care providers as a much-needed option for local families to access early learning opportunities for their children. Family child care providers can often better meet the needs of families with non-traditional parental work hours, match the cultural and linguistic preferences of families, and are often found in rural communities in which larger child care centers cannot be sustained. Enacting policy that recognizes family child care providers as eligible for POD funding would result in immediate growth in the number of available early learning slots for local keiki.

Related to quality practices that promote school readiness, we would also like to note that high quality early learning experiences that prepare children for kindergarten can be made available to children as much in family child care settings as in formal child care center classroom settings.

To address inclusion of family child care homes as eligible POD providers, with quality safeguards, we respectfully recommend the following amendments to Section 2, subsection (c), page 4, lines 1-2:

(3) An exempt center-based provider that meets the 2 requirements of section 346-152.5-; or

(4) A family child care home that is registered by the department in accordance with section 346-171, provided that they meet at least one of the following quality standards:

- i. is accredited through the National Association for Family Child Care or National Early Childhood Program Accreditation;
- ii. participates in a partnership program that aligns with federal Head Start or state prekindergarten program standards; or
- iii. achieves a satisfactory score on a nationally-recognized quality rating or assessment tool.

Additionally, to support the continuity of care and enrollment of children who have multiple years of age-eligibility for POD, we respectfully recommend the following amendment to Section 2, subsection (b), page 2, lines 10-13:

(b) Subject to the availability of funds, the program shall continuously serve [~~three- and four-year-old~~] children who are in the [~~two~~] three years prior to kindergarten entry until they enter kindergarten pursuant to section 302A-411- and each year prioritize children who were participating in the program in the year prior, provided they continue to meet program eligibility requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **HB692 HD1**.

To: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

From: Chevelle Davis, MPH - Director of Early Childhood & Health Policy
Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 692 H.D. 1 – Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program

Hearing: Monday, February 24, 2025, at 12:00 PM, Conference Room 308



POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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. 692 H.D. 1**, which expands the eligibility criteria for the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program and removes the requirements that POD providers be accredited. This measure is essential in increasing access to early learning for families across Hawai'i, particularly those with young children who face financial barriers to participation.

1. **The Need for Subsidies for Families with Two-Year-Olds** – The early years of a child's life are crucial for cognitive, social, and emotional growth. However, the cost of early learning remains a significant burden for many families. Expanding POD eligibility to include two-year-olds ensures that more children receive the early learning experiences necessary for future success, reducing long-term disparities in opportunities.

Research consistently shows that early intervention and structured environments significantly impact a child's future achievements and overall well-being. Providing subsidies for families with younger children would allow more parents/guardians to enter or remain in the workforce, ultimately strengthening Hawai'i's economy while ensuring children receive the foundational experiences they need.

2. **Removing Accreditation Requirement to Increase Accessibility** – Currently, a limited number of group child care centers and infant-toddler centers in Hawai'i hold accreditation from organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA). While accreditation is one indicator of standards, it is a costly and time-consuming process for providers. The high costs associated with accreditation, which can exceed \$4,000 for initial fees alone, often create barriers for smaller, community-based child care centers.

Since the number of child care centers in Hawai'i has been declining, removing the accreditation requirement will allow more providers to participate in the POD program, thereby expanding options for families in need. Many non-accredited centers still maintain strong care and development programs but cannot afford the financial and administrative burden of accreditation. This change will ensure that families have a broader selection of preschools to choose from without limiting access due to accreditation requirements.

3. **Including Family Child Care Homes** – In addition to expanding eligibility, it is crucial that family child care homes be included as providers under the POD program. Family child care homes offer a nurturing and flexible environment that many working families rely on. These providers often serve smaller groups, allowing for individualized attention and care that supports early development. By ensuring family child care homes are eligible for participation in the POD program, the state can broaden the options available to parents and care givers, making early learning more accessible to families in both urban and rural communities.

To address inclusion of family child care home as eligible POD providers, with quality safeguards, we respectfully recommend the following amendments to Section 2, subsection (c), page 4, lines 1-2:

- (3) An exempt center-based provider that meets the 2 requirements of section 346-152.5; or
- (4) A family child care home that is registered by the Department, in accordance with sections 346-171, provided that they meet at least one of the following quality standards:
 - i. is accredited through the National Association for Family Child Care or National Early Childhood Accreditation;
 - ii. participates in a partnership program that aligns with federal Head Start or state prekindergarten program standards; or

iii. achieves a satisfactory score on a nationally-recognized quality rating or assessment tool, as approved by the department.

Additionally, to support the continuity of care and enrollment of children who have multiple years of age eligibility for POD, we respectfully recommend the following amendment to Section 2, subsection (b), page 2, lines 10-13:

(b) Subject to the availability of funds, the program shall continuously serve [~~three and four year old~~] children who are in the [~~two~~] three years prior to kindergarten entry until they enter kindergarten pursuant to section 302A-411, and each year, prioritize children who were participating in the program in the year prior, provided they continue to meet the program eligibility requirements.

By passing **H.B. No. 692 H.D. 1**, the Legislature can take a crucial step toward making early learning more accessible and affordable for Hawai'i's families. I respectfully urge you to support this bill to expand early learning opportunities and strengthen our state's commitment to the well-being and future success of our keiki.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **H.B. No. 692 H.D. 1**.



**Parents And
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 692 HD1 RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM

TO: Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, & Members,
House Committee on Finance
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO
DATE: February 24, 2025 at 12:00 PM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 692 HD1 Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program, which expands the program's eligibility criteria, resulting in more local keiki being able to access early learning services at a younger age.

Research continues to show that—despite the expansion of state-funded early learning services and programs—less than 40% of 4-year-olds and less than 15% of 3-year-olds are enrolled in state-funded programs—clearly demonstrating a continued lack of access for many children and families. The bill will reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding child care expenses. The cost of child care is one of the largest expenses for many families on Oahu and across the State, often exceeding housing or other essential needs.

While family child care providers are generally limited in their inclusion in state-funded early learning offerings and programs, research indicates that they can play an outsized role in a community's overall early learning framework. Studies have also found that family child care providers are an important option. Low-income families, those with non-regular work hours, and ethnic or racial minorities are likely to utilize family child care providers. Making family child care providers eligible for POD funding would result in immediate growth in the number of available early learning slots for local keiki.

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.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:34:18 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Redfeather	Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mother's work, childcare expenses are difficult to fit into a family budget. Support for these younger keiki is important. Mahalo

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:18:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott R Ziehm	Indivisible Hawai'i Statewide Network	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This written testimony is in support of HB 692 to expand the Preschool Open Doors Program's eligibility criteria to include two-year-olds. Unfortunately, the demand for quality care far outweighs the supply, so many families struggle to access and afford the care options they want or need. While there are several federally funded programs that provide working families with access to quality child care opportunities, limited funding leaves many eligible children unserved. The impacts of these challenges extend beyond families and carry over to the workplace. As a direct result, the national economy loses \$122 billion annually in the form of lost earnings, productivity, and revenue.

Scott R Ziehm, DNP, RN, NEA-BC

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 10:08:43 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)	Pride at Work – Hawai‘i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice.

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i fully supports HB 692 HD 1.

We ask that you support this needed piece of legislation.

Mahalo,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)
President
[Pride at Work – Hawai‘i](#)



Hearing Date: **Monday, February 24, 2025, 12:00 PM, Conf. Rm 308**

To: Committee on Finance
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 692, HD1, Relating to the Preschool Open Doors 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 692, HD1, Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program** which will:

- Expand eligibility to include children ages 3-5 years old.
- Allow for continuous eligibility until kindergarten entry.
- Remove the accreditation mandate (but does continue to require licensure).
- Requires no appropriation.

Hawai'i is experiencing a child care crisis. The demand for available, quality, and affordable child care far exceeds the current capacity in Hawaii. There is only one opening for every four children ages six and below. The situation is even worse for those seeking a child care space for infants and toddlers with only one opening for every 37 children. This leaves families, and single parent households in particular in a bind. Without available child care services, many parents end up in a no-win position. They can either stay home with their young children and face increasing economic hardship or be stuck scrambling to find someone to "watch" their children. These informal child care settings often do not provide the necessary early childhood educational and developmentally appropriate activities which lead to a child being ready to enter kindergarten.

In Hawai'i, family members, especially grand parents have often stepped in to provide child care. Unfortunately, kupuna are finding it financially necessary to remain in, or return to, the workforce in order to make ends meet in our ever increasing expensive state.

In addition, having children actually penalizes women in the workforce. The Institute for Women's Policy Research reports 50.5% of households with children in Hawai'i have mothers who are the main source of family income. However, women working full time experience what's known as the "Motherhood Penalty". Working mothers make only \$.74 for every dollar working fathers make in Hawaii while the overall gender wage gap in Hawai'i where working women make \$.84 for every dollar a working man make.

The cost of licensed child care ranges from approximately \$13,000 to \$23,000 per year depending on the age of the child. The median income for a single parent family is \$43,050, which means that child care for an infant would use up over 50% of the salary; leaving little left over to pay for transportation, parking, food, housing and taxes.

One of the major obstacles preventing mothers from securing a well-paid, stable job is finding and retaining available, affordable, quality childcare. This measure increases the availability and access to the quality and affordable early child care which is so important for early childhood development and also allows parents the stability to continue in the workforce to provide for their family.

Please pass this measure and mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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, Kua'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.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:20:55 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Matsunaga	Save Medicaid Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii supports HB692 HD1

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 2:42:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kat Ouano Mobley	Kalaheo Elementary School PTSA	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 6:57:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelly Cogo	Hawaii Clubhouse Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Support HB692 HD1



February 24, 2025

Members of the House Committee on Finance:

Chair Kyle T. Yamashita

Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi

Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti

Rep. Daniel Holt

Rep. Ikaika Hussey

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Loy

Rep. Lisa Kitagawa

Rep. Matthias Kusch

Rep. Rachele F. Lamosao

Rep. Mike Lee

Rep. Tyson K. Miyake

Rep. Dee Morikawa

Rep. Shirley Ann Templo

Rep. David Alcos III

Rep. Julie Reyes Oda

Rep. Gene Ward

Re: HB692 Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) addresses the social, political, and economic impacts of domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters.

On behalf of HSCADV and our 25 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of HB692.

This bill addresses one of the most pressing and costly concerns for survivors of domestic violence - childcare access. Survivors cite housing and access to childcare as the top two reasons they stay with an abusive partner, especially if the partner's family is providing childcare. The Preschool Open Doors (POD) program is a successful public-private partnership that, if expanded, could provide more much-needed assistance to hardworking families.

Please support this program expansion to support survivors and increase childcare services in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:06:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ka'ale'a Kyrstin Hanawahine	Hawai'i Children's Action Network	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. ***I want to express my strong support for HB692***, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

Warm Regards,

Ka'ale'a Hanawahine

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 2:47:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sandy Ma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because an accessible child care system is good for Hawai'i.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 3:20:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah G. Nehmad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because an accessible child care system is very important for the keiki and family in Hawai'i

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 3:43:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brenda DuFresne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 4:16:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eileen M Gawrys	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

ESSENTIAL to allow parents gainful employment. it is possible that the Republicans in DC, under Trump, will create Medicaid rules that enforce no work, no pay. let's be sure we are prepared for this.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 4:18:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheryl Summers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because an accessible child care system is good for Hawai'i.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 5:09:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Passage of HB692 will help to keep young families in Hawaii who now must pay for preschool on their own. Too many young adults move to the mainland from Hawaii because of the high cost of owning a home. Please reduce the cost of childcare with favorable consideration of this bill. Mahalo.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 6:08:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erika Cabell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because an accessible child care system is good for Hawai'i.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 7:32:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I **strongly support** HB692. Child care is the second largest expense after housing — more families can afford child care if POD eligibility is expanded.

Mahalo for everyone's careful consideration!

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 7:37:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jada Rufo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because an accessible child care system is good for Hawaii.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 8:18:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann S Freed	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members,

Strong support for this measure. Particularly needed for working moms, single and married.
Keep our workforce strong and thriving.

Mahalo,

Ann S. Freed

Feminist-Forever in Mililani

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 1:11:35 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dorothy Norris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Preschool is necessary for working low income parents. This is a very important measure to ensure children have a place to go when parents are away.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 6:42:05 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support HB 692 HD1. Please support this bill.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:12:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tim Huycke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB692.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:14:48 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Child care is very difficult to find in Ka'u where I live. Please pass this measure to increase the number of affordable childcare facilities.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:29:41 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Claudia Wright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:35:18 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenneth Hirsch, MD, PhD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because of the insufficient childcare options available, especially to the working poor.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:54:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanani Kai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill.

Kanani Kai

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:03:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donna Mae Buscemi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To All Concerned,

With the United States falling drastically behind in education and specifically reading, it becomes evermore important we support our childrens development in any way possible. POD subsidies to families support families who need care and education for their child beyond the school day and school year. Consistency and routine help optimize each child's development, and being able to stay in the same program year round, with caring teachers, provides that.

Thank You for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Donna Buscemi

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:22:12 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JULIA I DAVIDSON	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:40:52 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda L Jenks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:45:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvonne Geesey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Keiko #1 resource.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:53:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia A Armstrong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure, because accessible childcare is necessary for families to live and work in Hawaii.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:55:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suzanne Buirgy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. Pease pass this measure to expand affordable childcare to include 2-year-olds and consider waiving the accreditation process for kindergarten. Every child deserves to be educated and cared for with love. Our keiki are our future. We risk everything if we allow our keiki to grow into adulthood without proper childcare during their formative years.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:55:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Berreman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare options for Hawaii families. I speak from my experience as a parent, pediatrician, and public health physician.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:59:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JANE TOLLEFSRUD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare eligibility criteria!

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:02:13 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
DeWaine Tollefsrud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare. It is hard enough to make ends meet here in Hawai'i.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:32:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:45:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 10:30:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealakai Hammond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

Mahalo,

Kealakai Hammond

Honolulu, HI 96817

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 10:46:33 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nandita Sharma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill. Please pass this measure to increase the number of affordable childcare places

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 10:49:21 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Babcock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:00:55 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gail Morrison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:11:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
martha chantiny	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Child Care is the second largest family expense after housing, expanding eligibility will allow more families to thrive. In addition, child care and preschools are essential infrastructure that support businesses and the economy.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:22:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692 HD1, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The Preschool Open Doors program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

Mahalo,

Molly Mamaril

Kaimukī resident

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:25:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Marsh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare options.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:32:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase access to affordable childcare.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:34:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Toni Fujimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:35:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Marie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:52:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janian K Thurman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase the number of affordable childcare options.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 12:02:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zane K Lacaden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 12:25:19 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In STRONG SUPPORT of HB692 HD1.

Aloha Chair and members of the Committee,

Please vote YES on this measure. All Hawaii benefits from affordable childcare.

Nancy Moser in Waikoloa on Hawai'i Island

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 12:46:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dorothy Zipp Malinski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The earlier the education of children the better!! Please include 2 yr olds in funded preschools. Make America Smart!

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 12:54:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. No. 692, which seeks to expand the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program and reduce significant barriers to accessing child care for families across our state while laying a strong foundation for the future success of our youngest keiki.

As it stands, the POD program is a vital resource for families with 3- and 4-year-old children, offering much-needed financial assistance to make child care more affordable and accessible. By expanding eligibility to include 2-year-olds, this bill acknowledges the importance of early childhood development during these formative years and addresses a substantial gap in child care support for families with younger children.

The bill will also reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding child care expenses. The cost of child care is one of the largest expenses for many families on O'ahu and across the State, often exceeding housing or other essential needs. Expanding the program to include

2-year-olds will alleviate financial pressures, enabling families to remain in the workforce and achieve greater economic stability, while simultaneously laying a strong foundation necessary for our keiki to grow and thrive.

We believe accreditation is a valuable marker of quality and the Department of Human Services recently establish an accreditation program to support the pursuit of accreditation and other quality improvement measures. Removing the accreditation requirement in this bill broadens family access to early learning opportunities while allowing providers to enhance quality through other complementary programs.

The City appreciates this balanced approach of this bill, which reflects a commitment to expanding access to early learning programs. By removing barriers, this bill will open doors for more families to access affordable and reliable care and better economic opportunities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

Mahalo,

Jennifer Lum, 'Ewa Beach

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 1:40:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helen Cox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in staunch support of H.B. No. 692, which seeks to expand the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program and reduce significant barriers to accessing childcare for families across our state while laying a strong foundation for the future success of our youngest keiki.

As it stands, the POD program is a vital resource for families with 3- and 4-year-old children, offering much-needed financial assistance to make childcare more affordable and accessible. By expanding eligibility to include 2-year-olds, this bill acknowledges the importance of early childhood development during these formative years and addresses a substantial gap in childcare support for families with younger children.

The bill will also reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding childcare expenses. The cost of childcare is one of the largest expenses for many families on O’ahu and across the State, often exceeding housing or other essential needs. Expanding the program to include 2-year-olds will alleviate financial pressures, enabling families to remain in the workforce and achieve greater economic stability, while simultaneously laying a solid foundation necessary for our keiki to grow and thrive.

As the former chancellor of Kauai Community College, a previous high school teacher, and a parent of two boys and three grandchildren, I understand the importance of early education and the obstacles many of our residents face to provide this opportunity to their keiki. Please pass HB692. Mahalo

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 1:43:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert A Marks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and members- please pass this mean sure.

Robert Marks

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 1:46:47 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Bonk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare options and ensure children have a good start to their learning lives.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 2:14:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 2:27:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane Aquino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members,
Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. No. 692, which seeks to expand the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program and reduce significant barriers to accessing child care for families across our state while laying a strong foundation for the future success of our youngest keiki. As it stands, the POD program is a vital resource for families with 3- and 4-year-old children, offering much-needed financial assistance to make child care more affordable and accessible. By expanding eligibility to include 2-year-olds, this bill acknowledges the importance of early childhood development during these formative years and addresses a substantial gap in child care support for families with younger children. The bill will also reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding child care expenses. The cost of child care is one of the largest expenses for many families on O’ahu and across the State, often exceeding housing or other essential needs. Expanding the program to include 2-year-olds will alleviate financial pressures, enabling families to remain in the workforce and achieve greater economic stability, while simultaneously laying a strong foundation necessary for our keiki to grow and thrive. We believe accreditation is a valuable marker of quality and the Department of Human Services recently establish an accreditation program to support the pursuit of accreditation and other quality improvement measures. Removing the accreditation requirement in this bill broadens family access to early learning opportunities while allowing providers to enhance quality through other complementary programs. The City appreciates this balanced approach of this bill, which reflects a commitment to expanding access to early learning programs. By removing barriers, this bill will open doors for more families to

access

affordable and reliable care and better economic opportunities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 2:40:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
gabrielle davidson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase the number of affordable childcare options.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 3:09:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare spots for Hawai'i's families.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 3:23:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

Judith Wilhoite

208 Kuleana Loop, Hilo, Hawaii 96720
judithwilhoite@gmail.com

February 22, 2025

To:

Committee on Finance
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Hearing Date:

February 24, 2025

Hearing Time:

12:00 PM

From:

Judith A. Wilhoite

RE: HB692 HD - PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Preschool is important for keiki on many levels. Children who graduate from preschool have both lower incarceration rates and higher earnings. They also learn important social skills which can give them a leg up in school and beyond¹. These are only some of the reasons why we, as a community, would be smart to make this opportunity available to as many children in our state as possible.

Please vote YES on HB692!

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

¹ <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ideas/usable-knowledge/16/10/clear-value-preschool>

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 5:33:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing HB692. Please pass this measure to make child care accessible and affordable. Some of the young people are leaving Hawai'i because they cannot afford to raise children in Hawai'i.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:03:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Tanaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:25:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen M Kimbrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Early childhood education is vital for children's development and growth. It needs to be accessible to all socioeconomic levels.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:05:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorna Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this child care measure. By removing barriers, this bill will open doors for more families to access affordable and reliable care and better economic opportunities. Mahalo for your favorable consideration.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:30:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Lu Kelley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha.

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare.

This is so important.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 5:57:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruth Fujita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Expanding preschool to 2 year olds will not only benefit parents, but the children will gain so much from learning to socialize and communicate. I can see already at 10 months, the impact a visit from other kids makes on my grandson. The interaction with kids is different than with adults and they learn so much from the interactions.

The high cost of living in Hawaii requires two incomes and the last thing we need is to have even more kamaaina head to the mainland. Preschool for 2 year olds will help working parents continue to support the economy and raise their families at the same time.

Mahalo for listening,

Ruth Fujita

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 7:57:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Gately	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 8:51:44 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lukas Petersons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:46:45 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richelle Concepcion	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:53:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyla Stueber	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 10:09:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Bellamy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this measure to increase access to affordable child care for Hawai'i's families.

Benefits to Families

- Child Care is the second largest expense after housing, expanding eligibility will allow more families to afford child care.
- Infant toddler care is expensive. Allowing families to receive funding for two year olds will relieve significant financial burden and allow more families to maintain gainful employment.
- Greater access will allow more children to get a strong start.

Benefits to Business and Economy

- According to First Five Years Fund, 2024 Fact Sheet, Hawai'i loses up to \$476 million per year due to a lack of child care.
- Child care and preschools are essential infrastructure that allow businesses an economy to thrive.
- Employers rely on workers to build a stable business, without child care the workforce is compromised and businesses suffer.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 10:22:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joan Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because an accessible child care system is good for Hawaii.

HB692 would benefit our families, employers and communities by providing working parents with increased access to quality, affordable childcare. This measure would help parents to return to work to earn money to support their families and would also help reduce our workforce shortage.

Thank you in advance for supporting HB692 and Hawaii's working families.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 11:02:18 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elena Vorm	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. No. 692, which seeks to expand the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program and reduce significant barriers to accessing child care for families across our state while laying a strong foundation for the future success of our youngest keiki. As it stands, the POD program is a vital resource for families with 3- and 4-year-old children, offering much-needed financial assistance to make child care more affordable and accessible. By expanding eligibility to include 2-year-olds, this bill acknowledges the importance of early childhood development during these formative years and addresses a substantial gap in child care support for families with

younger children. The bill will also reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding child care expenses. The cost of child care is one of the largest expenses for many families on O’ahu and across the State, often exceeding housing or other essential needs. Expanding the program to include 2-year-olds will alleviate financial pressures, enabling families to remain in the workforce and achieve greater economic stability, while simultaneously laying a strong foundation necessary for our keiki to grow and thrive.

We believe accreditation is a valuable marker of quality and the Department of Human Services recently establish an accreditation program to support the pursuit of accreditation and other quality improvement measures. Removing the accreditation requirement in this bill broadens family access to early learning opportunities while allowing providers to enhance quality through other complementary programs. The City appreciates this balanced approach of this bill, which reflects a commitment to expanding access to early learning programs. By removing barriers, this bill will open doors for more families to access affordable and reliable care and better economic opportunities.

Elena Vorm

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 11:06:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Arial Tochiki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 11:27:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Ebert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 12:03:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Morse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because finding and retaining available, affordable, quality childcare is a major obstacle preventing mothers from securing well-paid, stable jobs.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 12:40:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Nineth Ovando	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The US is the only "developed" country without proper healthcare for all, children are being forced to be born and at a minimum we should be taking care of them. The children did not ask for the politicians and greedy individuals who sit in office and take bribes from giant corporations to make laws on behalf of them. We need to protect our children and provide them with a modicum of care, it's the least we can do.

House Committee on Finance Hearing
Monday, Feb. 24, 2025 at Noon
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

RE: HB692, HD1 - RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM.

IN SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. No. 692,HD1, which seeks to expand the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program and to reduce significant barriers to accessing child care for families across our state while laying a strong foundation for the future success of our youngest keiki.

While my children are now grown, in graduate school and college on the mainland, I remember how hard it was to obtain and afford preschool placement for them. I remember having to camp out overnight on New Year's Day to get a space in line on the first business day of the year to place my daughter for fall school year preschool admission. The crazy things parents have to do to secure child care they can, hopefully, afford. When my youngest was a toddler, I placed her in an in-home child care in my neighborhood that I found by word of mouth. I was lucky that our family owned our own business, so I had the flexibility to work around my child care needs and still afford housing. That was back in the early 2000's when housing was not crazy like it is now, especially on Maui. Not everyone is as fortunate today as I was when my kids were young. Families are having to forego having children or move to the mainland. Hawai'i's families deserve more from our communities, and that is why I am submitting this testimony in support of HB692, HD1.

By expanding POD eligibility to include children in the three years prior to kindergarten, this bill acknowledges the importance of early childhood development during these early childhood years and addresses a substantial gap in child care support for families with younger children. The bill will also reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding child care expenses. Expanding the program to include children in the three years prior to kindergarten will alleviate financial pressures, enabling people to start or grow families, and to remain in the workforce in Hawai'i rather than being forced to move to the mainland.

There is a shortage of childcare options for younger children. Removing the accreditation requirement in this bill broadens family access to early learning opportunities like the one my youngest daughter participated in. By removing barriers, this bill will open doors for more families to access affordable and reliable care and better economic opportunities.

I humbly request the members of the Committee to support this measure.

Christine L. Andrews, JD
Wailuku, Maui

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 12:59:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support HB 692 because availability and access to early child care for pre-school age children would benefit our State in so many important ways. The majority of the population of children this age are presently not receiving the care they need to become successful, productive citizens of our State. Providing child care for these children benefits the entire community and our economy.

Working parents could return to their jobs if affordable child care was provided to them. This helps employers. Some of these parents could continue education to further their careers if affordable child care was available to them and this would be beneficial to their children, and our State's economy.

There is a shortage of child care spaces for children under age 6 and the shortage of space for infants and toddlers in this group is critical. The high cost of child care is highly unreasonable for most working parents, and simply unaffordable for many. Affordable pre-school care and education must be expanded for parents in Hawaii.

Thank you for considering my viewpoints. Please help Hawaii's working parents and their children and support HB692.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 1:15:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha! Chair, Vice Chair and Committe Members.

My name is Leilani Kailiawa. I am a parent and community leader. Mahalo nui loa for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawaii's children and families. Chid Care is the second largest expense after housing - more families can afford child care if POD eligibility is expanded. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficietn strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public - private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

Mahalo for your time to read.

Leilani K

February 23, 2025

To: The Honorable Kyle Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
and members of the House Committee on Finance

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 692 HD 1– Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. No. 692 HD 1.

Aloha,

My name is Dr. Terry Lock. Currently, 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.

HB 692 HD 1 seeks to expand the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program to more young children of Hawai'i's families and reduce one of the barriers for families to access POD programs. This measure lays a strong foundation for the future success of more of our youngest keiki.

As it stands, the POD program is a vital resource for families with 3- and 4-year-old children, offering much-needed financial assistance to make child care more affordable as the cost of child care is one of the largest expenses for many families on O'ahu and across the State, often exceeding housing or other essential needs.

With HB 692 HD 1, the POD program will expand to add 2-year-olds. This expansion will alleviate financial pressures so more families will remain in the workforce and achieve greater economic stability, while simultaneously laying a strong foundation for their 2- year olds to grow and thrive.

In addition, I am in support of expanding the types of early learning programs for eligible families. This includes licensed group child care centers, licensed group child care homes, licensed infant and toddler child care centers, registered family child care programs, and exempt center-based providers that meet the requirements of section 346—152.5.

I believe that all young children and their families deserve quality child care options and that early learning program accreditation is a key marker of quality. Furthermore, I commend how the Department of Human Services' (DHS) has recently established an accreditation support program for licensed child care centers and regulated family child care programs. By including the statement on p. 4, lines 3-5, "Participation in the program shall not require group child care centers or group child care homes to be accredited by an approved accredited body", this will broaden families' access to POD funds and not disrupt the complementary program through DHS which allows early learning providers to enhance quality through accreditation.

I appreciate this balanced approach of this bill, which reflects a commitment to expanding access to early learning programs. By removing barriers, this bill will open doors for more families to access affordable and reliable care and better economic opportunities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 692 HD 1.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 5:33:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joanna Galingana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families.

I work with many working families who are interested in preschool but the barrier of preschool tuition are not a match for the high cost of living in hawaii. As a parent myself, I also felt the struggle. Early Childhood Education benefits the future Keikis.

Please vote YES on HB692!

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 5:56:47 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and committee members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I strongly urge you to support HB692. This will allow more families to be able to have their child in early childhood care through POD expansion. This will create more allowance for parents to work while their child is getting cared for and allow earlier access to learning.

Mahalo nui, and please support HB692

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 6:29:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

To: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair

Representative Jenna Takenouchi Vice Chair

House Committee on Finance

From: Chloe “Pua’ena” Vierra-Villanueva

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 692 – Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. No. 692, which seeks to expand the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program and reduce significant barriers to accessing child care for families across our state while laying a strong foundation for the future success of our youngest keiki.

As it stands, the POD program is a vital resource for families with 3- and 4-year-old children, offering much-needed financial assistance to make child care more affordable and accessible. By expanding eligibility to include 2-year-olds, this bill acknowledges the importance of early childhood development during these formative years and addresses a substantial gap in child care support for families with younger children. My son started preschool at 2.8 years old and as a late born 3 year old, we still do not qualify for this vital support.

The bill will also reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding child care expenses. The cost of child care is one of the largest expenses for many families on O‘ahu and across the State, often exceeding housing or other essential needs. Expanding the program to include 2-year-olds will alleviate financial pressures, enabling families to remain in the workforce and achieve greater economic stability, while simultaneously laying a strong foundation necessary for our keiki to grow and thrive. This is especially supportive for toddler-age care which is sparse and more expensive than preschool.

The balanced approach of this bill, which reflects a commitment to expanding access to early learning programs will help to continue to remove barriers for families. This bill will open doors for more families to access affordable and reliable care and better economic opportunities.

Please support this measure.

Mahalo,

C. Pua‘ena Vierra-Villanueva

‘Ohana Leadership Council

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 6:41:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my **strong support for HB692**, which requires *no appropriation* while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources. Families need access to affordable, high quality child care.

Please vote YES on HB692!

Sincerely,

Jordan Smith

Honolulu, 96813

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 10:36:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!
aloha!

P. Anderson

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 10:42:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

me ke aloha ‘āina,
Nanea Lo
Mō‘ili‘ili, HI 96826
Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Executive Commission Member
Board Member, Hawai‘i Workers Center
Kanakanā Maoli/Lineal Descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 11:01:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Yamashita, Co-Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Finance and HSH Committees:

Research has shown that early education makes a huge difference in the lives of children. This early education should be made universally available to families and not dependent on economic status. Healthy pre-school experiences and relationships give children confidence in learning academic subjects. As they grow, and incorporate more and more knowledge of their community and wider environment, they are predisposed to be interested in how the community works, and to become good citizens, contributing to the wellbeing of all members.

I urge you to pass HB692!!

Sincerely,

Cheryl Ho, Nu‘uanu

Strong support for HB692

January 23, 2025

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair House Finance Committee
Representative Jenna Takanouchi, V-Chair, Finance Committee

Re: HB692 Pre-school Open Doors, Access for 2 year olds

Dear Chair Yamashita, V-Chair Takanouchi, Members of the Committee.

My name is Gail Breakey, and I am testifying in support of HB692, which will increase access to affordable child care for Hawaii's families. The bill expands eligibility to include children ages 2-5 years and Family Child care Centers. It allows for continuous eligibility until kindergarten entry and removes the accreditation mandate. These services are sorely needed considering that both parents usually need to work in our economy, and that around half of Hawaii Families are ALICE or living below the poverty level.

Benefits to Families

- Child Care is the second largest expense after housing, expanding eligibility will allow more families to afford child care.
- Infant toddler care is expensive. Allowing families to receive funding for two year olds will relieve significant financial burden and allow more families to maintain gainful employment.
- Greater access will allow more children to get a strong start.

Benefits to Business and Economy

- Per the First Five Years Fund, Hawai'i loses up to \$476 million/ year due to lack of child care.
- Child care and preschools are essential infrastructure that allow businesses and the economy to thrive.
- Employers rely on workers to build a stable business; without child care the workforce is compromised and businesses suffer

Clearly this legislation will benefit families as well as the economy at a time when families are experiencing severe economic hardship. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation and for the opportunity to testify

Sincerely,



Gail Breakey, RN, MPH

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 6:39:06 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rene Robertson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare options for the parents and Keiki of Hawai'i

HB No. 692 Sample Testimony for FIN

Date: February 24, 2025

To: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Senator Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

From: Sherrie Galdeira, Ohana Leadership Council Member
Hawaii Children's Action Network

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 692 – Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program

Position: Strong Support

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of H.B. No. 692**. This bill does not require an appropriation. HB 692 will expand access to the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program reducing significant barriers to accessing childcare for families across our state. This bill will help more families to enter and remain in the workforce and support Hawai'i's economy.

The bill helps to reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding childcare expenses. The cost of childcare is one of the largest expenses for many families on O'ahu and across the state, causing many families to leave the workforce or choose between childcare and other essential needs. It is estimated that Hawaii loses upwards of \$476 million dollars per year due to the impacts of a lack of childcare.

Many rural areas in Hawaii are considered childcare deserts, where there is little or no access to childcare, this is especially true for families with younger children. Expanding the program to include 2-year-olds and utilizing family childcare homes will significantly expand access to childcare and help to alleviate financial pressures for families with young children, helping families across the state achieve greater economic stability.

We believe accreditation is a valuable marker of quality. However, requiring accreditation reduces the number of available seats due to the lower ratios required for accreditation than what is required by the Department of Human Services. The Department of Human Services recently established an accreditation program to support the pursuit of accreditation and other quality improvement measures. Removing the accreditation requirement in this bill broadens family access to early learning opportunities while allowing providers to enhance quality through other complementary programs.

The POD program provides a cost-efficient strategy while still meeting the need through supplemental funding. It's a public-private partnership that grows government's reach in a cost-effective and meaningful way. By removing barriers, this bill will open doors for more families to access affordable and reliable care and better economic opportunities.

Page 2

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:00:13 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raphael Moller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase affordable child care in Hawai'i

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:15:52 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Takagi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote YES on HB692!

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:21:33 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kee Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires no appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits working families and improves preschool resources.

Please vote yes for HB692, Mahalo!

Kee

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:24:46 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Date: February 24, 2025

To: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair

Senator Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

House Committee on Finance

From: Alexandria Sisson

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 692 – Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program

Position: Strong Support

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. No. 692. This bill does not require an appropriation. HB 692 will expand access to the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program reducing significant barriers to accessing child care for families across our state. This bill will help more families to enter and remain in the workforce and support Hawai'i's economy.

The bill helps to reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding child care expenses. The cost of child care is one of the largest expenses for many families on O'ahu and across the state, causing many families to leave the workforce or choose between childcare and

other essential needs. It is estimated that Hawaii loses upwards of \$476 million dollars per year due to the impacts of a lack of childcare.

Many rural areas in Hawaii are considered child care deserts, where there is little or no access to childcare, this is especially true for families with younger children. Expanding the program to include 2-year-olds and utilizing family child care homes will significantly expand access to childcare and help to alleviate financial pressures for families with young children, helping families across the state achieve greater economic stability.

We believe accreditation is a valuable marker of quality. However, requiring accreditation reduces the number of available seats due to the lower ratios required for accreditation than what is required by the Department of Human Services. The Department of Human Services recently established an accreditation program to support the pursuit of accreditation and other quality improvement measures. Removing the accreditation requirement in this bill broadens family access to early learning opportunities while allowing providers to enhance quality through other complementary programs.

The POD program provides a cost-efficient strategy while still meeting the need through supplemental funding. It's a public-private partnership that grows government's reach in a cost-effective and meaningful way. By removing barriers, this bill will open doors for more families to access affordable and reliable care and better economic opportunities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:25:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raya Esteban	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: February 24, 2025

To: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair

Senator Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

House Committee on Finance

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 692 – Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. No. 692. This bill does not require an appropriation. HB 692 will expand access to the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program reducing significant barriers to accessing child care for families across our state. This bill will help more families to enter and remain in the workforce and support Hawai'i's economy.

The bill helps to reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding child care expenses. The cost of child care is one of the largest expenses for many families on O'ahu and across the state, causing many families to leave the workforce or choose between childcare and other essential needs. It is estimated that Hawaii loses upwards of \$476 million dollars per year due to the impacts of a lack of childcare.

Many rural areas in Hawaii are considered child care deserts, where there is little or no access to childcare, this is especially true for families with younger children. Expanding the program to include 2-year-olds and utilizing family child care homes will significantly expand access to childcare and help to alleviate financial pressures for families with young children, helping families across the state achieve greater economic stability.

We believe accreditation is a valuable marker of quality. However, requiring accreditation reduces the number of available seats due to the lower ratios required for accreditation than what is required by the Department of Human Services. The Department of Human Services recently established an accreditation program to support the pursuit of accreditation and other quality improvement measures. Removing the accreditation requirement in this bill broadens family

access to early learning opportunities while allowing providers to enhance quality through other complementary programs.

The POD program provides a cost-efficient strategy while still meeting the need through supplemental funding. It's a public-private partnership that grows government's reach in a cost-effective and meaningful way. By removing barriers, this bill will open doors for more families to access affordable and reliable care and better economic opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

Mahalo,

Raya Esteban

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:52:13 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shana Laririt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare for which our State is in desperate need of.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:59:48 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB No. 692 Sample Testimony for FIN

Date: February 24, 2025

To: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair

Senator Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

House Committee on Finance

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 692 – Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program

Position: Strong Support

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. No. 692. This bill does not require an appropriation. HB 692 will expand access to the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program reducing significant barriers to accessing child care for families across our state. This bill will help more families to enter and remain in the workforce and support Hawai'i's economy.

The bill helps to reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding child care expenses. The cost of child care is one of the largest expenses for many families on Kaua'i and across the state, causing many families to leave the workforce or choose between childcare and other essential needs. It is estimated that Hawaii loses upwards of \$476 million dollars per year due to the impacts of a lack of childcare.

Many rural areas in Hawaii are considered child care deserts, where there is little or no access to childcare, this is especially true for families with younger children. Expanding the program to include 2-year-olds and utilizing family child care homes will significantly expand access to childcare and help to alleviate financial pressures for families with young children, helping families across the state achieve greater economic stability.

We believe accreditation is a valuable marker of quality. However, requiring accreditation reduces the number of available seats due to the lower ratios required for accreditation than what is required by the Department of Human Services. The Department of Human Services recently established an accreditation program to support the pursuit of accreditation and other quality improvement measures. Removing the accreditation requirement in this bill broadens family access to early learning opportunities while allowing providers to enhance quality through other complementary programs.

The POD program provides a cost-efficient strategy while still meeting the need through supplemental funding. It's a public-private partnership that grows government's reach in a cost-effective and meaningful way. By removing barriers, this bill will open doors for more families to access affordable and reliable care and better economic opportunities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

Joell Edwards - Wainiha, Kaua'i

Rodney Saito
3138 Waialae Ave #232
Honolulu, HI 96816

February 24, 2025

Ms. Lisa Marten, Chair and members of the
Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Marten and members of the Committee on Human Services & Homelessness:

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. I want to express my strong support for HB692, which requires appropriation while helping to increase access to early learning opportunities to Hawai'i's children and families. The POD program demonstrates the success of cost-efficient strategy and meeting an ongoing need through supplemental funding. This public-private partnership growth benefits families and improves preschool resources.

I strongly encourage to please vote YES on HB692!

Sincerely,



Rodney Saito

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:48:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I believe expanding the Preschool Open Doors Program to include two-year-olds is a good idea and will help many people in our state. Mahalo.

HB 692

Date: February 24, 2025

To: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Senator Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance
From: Paula Yanagi (Preschool Director)

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 692 – Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program

Position: Strong Support

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of H.B. No. 692**. This bill does not require an appropriation. HB 692 will expand access to the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program reducing significant barriers to accessing child care for families across our state. This bill will help more families to enter and remain in the workforce and support Hawai'i's economy.

The bill helps to reduce the significant financial burden many families face regarding child care expenses. The cost of child care is one of the largest expenses for many families across the state, causing many families to leave the workforce or choose between childcare and other essential needs. It is estimated that Hawaii loses upwards of \$476 million dollars per year due to the impacts of a lack of childcare.

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The POD program provides a cost-efficient strategy while still meeting the need through supplemental funding. It's a public-private partnership that grows government's reach in a cost-effective and meaningful way. By removing barriers, this bill will open doors for more families to access affordable and reliable care and better economic opportunities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

HB-692-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 1:07:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann V Saffery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha All,

Please pass this measure to increase number of affordable childcare.

Mahalo for all you do,

Ann V Saffery

Honolulu, HI